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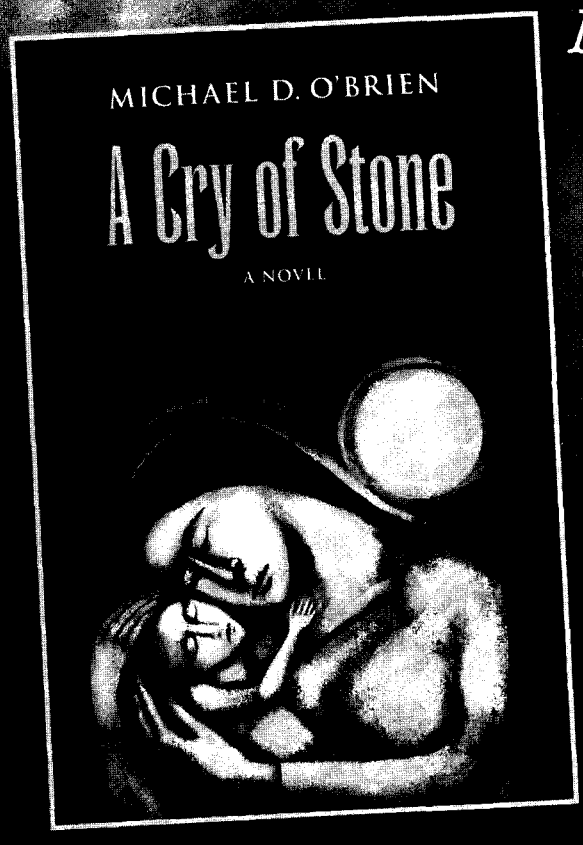

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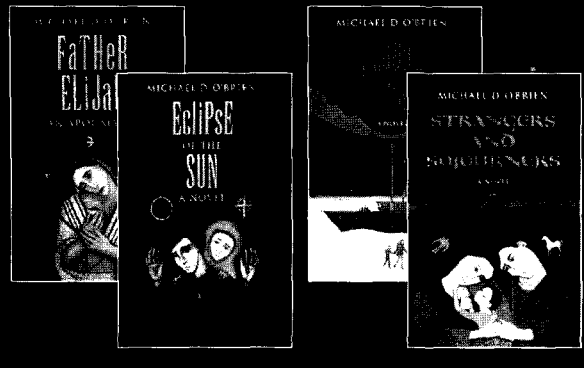

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The Church and the Holocaust

To the extent that it is read by Catholic apologists and others who have a broad and deep knowledge of Europe in the 1930s and 40s, Martin Rhonheimer's "The Holocaust: What Was Not Said" (November 2003) has considerable value. However, it will also be read by many who do not know much about that time, and by others who will see it as vindicating their idea that the Church did nothing to help the Jews. They will not find in Father Rhonheimer's article the balanced perspective appropriate to understanding those terrible days.

The great story of the Catholic Church during the Holocaust is that the Church did a great deal to help the Jews, far more than any other institution of any kind. At the same time, Pius XII did not provide stentorian rhetoric. Presenting both of these observations together would have constituted a balanced assessment, but Fr. Rhonheimer concentrated exclusively on "what was not said." Looking only at the weakest part of the Church's record does not constitute a balanced assessment.

But even if focusing only on "what was not said" were a fair subject for his article, a balanced perspective would have required some explanation of why it was not said. Pius XII's highest responsibility was the protection and preservation of the Holy See, a tiny 109-acre enclave in the middle of the capital city of an Axis power at war. Could that have made a difference?

When we say that someone should have said more, we always need a standard by which we measure sufficiency. In the Holocaust context, the American Jewish response is an appropriate reference. American Jews had the greatest sympathy for their brother European Jews, they had the physical safety that Pius XII lacked, and they had the *New York Times*, at that time the world's newspaper of record. Yet American Jewish organizations also maintained a discreet silence. If Fr. Rhonheimer had said that neither the Church nor American Jews said enough about the Holocaust, there would have been some sense of balance.

Martin K. Barrack
Hardy, Arkansas

I read Father Martin Rhonheimer's article with great interest. I must say that I found it to be informative and intriguing but also highly disappointing. While I appreciate the author's desire to highlight the errant ways in which many Catholic apologists have overemphasized the Church's actions during this period of history, I am quite shocked at his tone and the cavalier manner in which he derides the Church for caring for her own.

Although I acknowledge that the Church, as the universal instrument and sacrament of salvation, had (and has) an obligation to speak out and defend the dignity and rights of all human persons, the Church also had (and has) an obligation to defend the dignity and rights of her own faithful. Indeed, does not our faith teach that the Church is our Mother? What mother would concentrate on defending neighborhood children from a bully at the expense of her own children? Or what mother, when forced to make a choice as to whom she had more power to help, would sacrifice her own children? I believe this was the situation of the Church during the Second World War—clearly in

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Nazi Germany but also throughout Europe.

I also take issue with Fr. Rhonheimer's statement that "the only thing that could have derailed the trains to Auschwitz—if indeed that was ever possible—was unmistakeable condemnation of anti-Semitism in any form." I find this statement to be the height of folly. History proved that the trains to Auschwitz were derailed only by the troops and tanks of Generals Bradley, Patton, Montgomery, Koniev, Zhukov, and Rokossovski.

Finally, I find Fr. Rhonheimer's treatment of Michael Cardinal von Faulhaber to be pedantic. Was this not the same cardinal who ordered yellow Star of David armbands to be placed on the statues of Christ and Mary in his archdiocese in response to the Nazi treatment of Jews?

I do sincerely appreciate Fr. Rhonheimer's article, but I find it hard to understand why a Catholic priest would use hindsight to deride the Church for defending herself and her faithful during an intense time of persecution, fear, and death. Perhaps my memory does not serve me well, but I do not recall any anti-Roman statements issued by the popes of the first three centuries of the Church, when the Roman legions actively engaged in the wholesale slaughter of the barbarians. The Church must have been too concerned for her own "self-defense and pastoral interests." Perhaps a more appropriate study for Fr. Rhonheimer would be to look at how the Church has acted throughout her history when faced with persecution. Would that study not show that the Church as Mother spent her resources primarily on "self-defense and the pastoral interests" of her faithful?

Steven A. Weidenkopf
Denver, Colorado

Father Martin Rhonheimer argues that the failure of the Catholic Church to unequivocally repudiate anti-Judaism with regard to all Jews, not just Jewish converts, produced a "climate" hostile to Jews and thereby made it impossible to generate a broad popular opposition to the Holocaust. Unfortunately, Fr. Rhonheimer provides no evidence whatever for this claim. He quotes a few random sources that make reference to the "Jewish problem" but does not connect these with mass opinion or even show that these statements were widely known.

Two points need to be made here. First, the only audience that mattered regarding Catholic pronouncements was the Nazi heirarchy. In all the private and public pronouncements that I have seen, they affirmed in the strongest possible way that the Catholic Church was the defender of all Jews or, as Fr. Rhonheimer would have it, of Jews as such. References to Pius XI as the "Jew Pope" and to Catholicism as the "Jew religion" abound. The Nazis did not see the distinction that Fr. Rhonheimer draws between the Church as defender of converts and of "Jews in general." If the Nazis did not see the difference, why does Fr. Rhonheimer suppose that ordinary Catholics did?

Second, in the 1930s discussion of the "Jewish problem" occurred in the context of a long-established doctrine of the desirability of a Catholic state. This was based on the understanding that the Catholic Church possesses the certain means of salvation and that the state is, in consequence, obliged to enforce the moral law and to assist the Church in her work of salvation. Inevitably, a question arose regarding the status of unassimilable non-Christian minorities. This was not a one-way street. Robust nineteenth-century Zionism represented the will of millions of Jews not to assimilate. Thus, in a Catholic state, Jews could not rule but were to be protected from harm and permitted to practice their religion, a status similar to that of Christians in Israel today. Fr. Rhonheimer does not appear to comprehend the political, cultural, and religious context in which these discussions occurred, and thus he concludes that talk of the "Jewish problem" was raw anti-Semitism. The result is a retrospective political correctness that is familiarly used today to stifle any criticism of Israeli policy, lest we again embark on "the road to Auschwitz."

Of course, the Second Vatican Council repudiated the ideal of a Catholic state, thus assuring the victory of secularism with its anti-life "values": contraception, divorce, sexual disorder, euthanasia, and abortion—whose systematic slaughter of innocents exceeds Hitler's wildest dreams. When, I wonder, will "purification of memory and conscience" be applied to those responsible for the deconstruction of Catholicism and the obliteration of Christendom?

Robert L. Phillips
Professor of Philosophy
University of Connecticut
West Hartford, Connecticut

Permit me to offer my appreciation to FIRST THINGS for publishing Martin Rhonheimer's excellent article. Unfortunately, the debate over the role of the wartime leadership of the Catholic Church during the Holocaust has become the object of heated polemics on both sides. Far too often, it seems to me, participants in this discussion lose sight of how the wartime Vatican operated in a cultural context quite unlike anything that most of us can imagine. Written with particular authority because of his familiarity with the religious and cultural context of papal discourse, Father Rhonheimer's article reminds us of how different the worldview of Church leaders in the 1930s and 40s was from our own. That is why it was possible for the Vatican stoutly to oppose Nazism without taking up the cause of the Jews. Fr. Rhonheimer's essay calls attention not

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only to the shortcomings of Church reactions during the Holocaust—shortcomings in which the Church was hardly alone—but also to the distance that we have come since the Holocaust. By implication, his reflections underscore the importance of the great changes that have taken place in the Church as a result of the Second Vatican Council—and of the continuing need for honesty, humility, and nuance when making historical judgments.

Michael R. Marrus
Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe
Professor of Holocaust Studies
University of Toronto
Ontario, Canada

Martin Rhonheimer responds:
My critics ignore the central argument of my article and criticize positions that I have not advanced. One example: Martin K. Barrack writes: "Pius XII's highest responsibility was the protection and preservation of the Holy See." What has that to do with the central questions raised in my article? Why, for instance, did neither the Church in Germany nor the Vatican ever clearly protest the 1935 Nuremberg racial laws or the pogrom of November 1938? Why did the Church never protest against the Nazis' increasing persecution of the Jews? Moreover, my article was not about Pius XII and the Holocaust. (The best treatment of this highly complex subject is, in my view, Giovanni Miccoli's excellent book, *I dilemmi e i silenzi di Pio XII*, published in Milan in 2000 and unfortunately not available in English.)

Mr. Barrack is correct in writing that the Church "did a great deal to help the Jews, far more than any other institution," and my article explicitly mentioned this. Its first paragraph even called the arguments of those who dispute this fact "so devoid of historical foundation that they range from the absurd to the outrageous." Using Church rescue efforts, however, for apologetic purposes (as Catholic apologists regularly do) is a diversion—not least because these efforts belong almost entirely to the wartime period, not to the time when the Church could still have spoken clearly with some hope of influencing events. Nor do I dispute (indeed, I explicitly affirm) Steven A. Weidenkopf's argument that the Church's first duty is to protect its own children. Yet Church apologists tell us that, to the extent that the Church remained "silent," it was to prevent worse sufferings for the Jews. This is, at best, a half-truth. The *primary* reason for such silence was protection of Church interests. It is high time for Catholics to admit this, rather than continuing to propagate myths. The decision of the Church hierarchy to concentrate on its own pastoral responsibilities and leave the Jews to look after themselves is, from a historical point of view, fully understandable. With the benefit of hindsight we can also see, however, that the decision was sadly misguided. Would not an expression of regret be more appropriate than a self-righteous apologetic?

As I stated in the article's conclusion, we are not called to judge the consciences of those who were subject to pressures we have never experienced. But Catholics owe it to our Jewish brethren, and to history, to admit that the Church felt little responsibility for Jews during the Nazi period; that it was inextricably bound up with social structures and ways of thinking which, though they did not cause the Holocaust, nonetheless helped make it possible; and that all this made it difficult for all but a few (such as Edith Stein and Franziskus Stratmann, O.P.) to realize what was going on, and thus to avoid being deceived by Hitler.

I never claimed, as Mr. Weidenkopf contends, that a clear condemnation of anti-Semitism could have "derailed" the trains to Auschwitz. On the contrary, I wrote that "once the trains started rolling, the Church was powerless to stop them." But I added: "Neither can the Church boast that it was among those who, from the start, tried to avert Auschwitz by standing up publicly for its future victims." Inability to foresee the Holocaust does not relieve people of all responsibility. At a time when no one could even imagine the horrors to come, the only thing that might possibly have averted them was a clear and explicit condemnation of every form of discrimination against Jews, as well as principled opposition to the Nazis' Jewish policy and the state that promoted it. From the start, however, the Church consciously and deliberately avoided such opposition. It did so in order to avoid making things worse—*not* for the Jews, but for the Church itself. An important reason for this stance was the view, widespread among both the laity and church leaders, that the Jews were a danger to society. This made it difficult for Catholics to perceive the implications and dangers of the Nazis' Jewish policy.

I repeat: to an extent this is understandable. But in view of the Holocaust we must regret that Catholics of that period were totally unaware that their traditionally negative view of the Jews, the fruit of centuries of a "teaching of contempt" by the Church itself, facilitated Nazi policies. In his celebrated Advent sermons of 1933 defending pre-Christian Jewry, Cardinal Faulhaber said that post-Christian Jews had "received a bill of divorce, and from that time forth Assuerus wanders, forever restless, over the face of the earth." The Church was certainly not responsible for the rise of Nazi anti-Semitism—indeed, it did much to counter Nazi ideology. But the Church (as well as others) did help prepare the soil to receive the Nazis' poisonous seed, and to bring it to fruition. In the decades prior to the Holocaust the Church supported, and often actively promoted, the

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aversion to Jews that was so widespread in Europe. Hence the Church must bear some responsibility for what happened to the Jews. Consciousness of this responsibility was totally lacking at the time. Many Christians today still seem to suffer from this historical amnesia.

In the final paragraph of his letter, Robert L. Phillips seems to reject Vatican II by dreaming of a restored "Catholic state" with a special discriminatory status for Jews. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that he distorts my arguments. I never claimed that the Church's "silence" created "a 'climate' hostile to Jews." My contention is that traditional anti-Judaism and social prejudice against Jews—as well as a theology that viewed persecution of Jews as reparation for the murder of Christ and thus as a help toward Jewish conversion—induced most Christians, from 1933 on, to assume the role of passive observers. As late as 1945 the celebrated French Church historian Daniel-Rops raised the question (in his book *Jésus en son temps*) whether the horror of Jewish pogroms might not be "in the mysterious balance of the divine will a compensation for the unfathomable horror of the crucifixion."

Professor Phillips asks why, if Nazi leaders saw no difference between baptized and unbaptized Jews, "ordinary Catholics" could have perceived such a difference? The answer is simple: because ordinary Catholics were not racists. Traditional hostility to Jews was based *not* on racial but on religious, social, economic, and cultural grounds. This meant that ordinary Catholics did not perceive the Church's clear rejection of *racial* anti-Semitism as condemnation of *all* anti-Jewish laws—which inevitably undermined any opposition to such laws.

We must not forget the price that the Church paid for the Reich Concordat of July 1933: withdrawal from the political realm and loyalty to Hitler's regime. At least in Germany, Church leaders originally viewed the Concordat not as a defense against the regime but as establishing a basis for effective cooperation and a contribution to what they mistakenly thought would be a national and Christian renewal of Germany. As late as February 9, 1936, Cardinal Faulhaber praised Pius XI (in whose name the Concordat was signed) for being "the first foreign ruler to conclude a solemn treaty with the government of the Reich," thus showing himself to be Germany's "true friend at a time when millions in other countries still reserved judgment, or regarded the new regime with skepticism." German Catholics heard similar utterances from many of their bishops. What they never heard was a clear condemnation of the Nuremberg racial laws.

A further factor to be considered is the Church's political and social antimodernism and (as Prof. Phillips correctly though one-sidedly mentions) nostalgia for a "Catholic state." At the start, many Catholics viewed Hitler as a Christian statesman and the Nazi state as a bulwark against Bolshevism, socialism, and liberalism—all movements thought to be dominated by Jews. Those who are blind to these historical facts and continue to mention only the positive things the Church did need to be reminded of the negative side of the record. What the Church did for the Jews was done *despite* traditional prejudices and the burden of history—which makes it all the more praiseworthy. Indeed, countless Catholics—including Pius XII—brought honor to the Christian name and gave shining examples of Christian brotherly love. At the same time there were also many Catholics who actively participated in the persecution of Jews, delivering Jewish "murderers of Christ" to their Nazi executioners.

To sum up: for historically quite understandable reasons the Catholic Church never really felt itself responsible for the Jews or for their fate. We Christians must regret this today—and we owe our Jewish brethren an expression of this regret. How, otherwise, can there be any lasting reconciliation? If we seek an example of the form such an expression of regret might take, we could do worse than consider the declaration of the German Bishops in May 1995, on the fiftieth anniversary of Nazi Germany's defeat: "There was a deep chasm, and mutual enmity, between the Nazi system of injustice and the Catholic Church. The Church decisively rejected the racist ideology of the Nazis. But there was no public protest when this ideology was put into ruthless practice." The Church repeatedly protested attempts to interfere with its pastoral work, the bishops said, and tried to immunize the faithful against Nazi influences. "But there was insufficient courage, strength, and vision to support those who did not belong to the Church, or were opposed to it." Admiration and gratitude for those who resisted, the German bishops concluded, must not diminish sorrow and shame for those who failed.

Calvin and the Commandments

In "Keeping the Commandments" (November 2003) Robert Louis Wilken presents an erudite survey of the role played by the Ten Commandments in civil and ecclesiastical life. Although he refers to Calvinists and the Puritans, he does not mention John Calvin himself, who may have understood the Ten Commandments better than anyone else in the past five hundred years. Calvin's three uses of the Law are especially pertinent in the current debate.

The first use of the Law has two parts: 1) the Law convicts humans of their depravity; 2) the Law convinces

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humans that they cannot remedy their depraved condition and therefore must turn to God. Even in this first use, Calvin emphasizes God's righteousness and His grace.

The second use of the Law concerns civil matters. Human society needs rules in order not to devolve into chaos. Calvin recognizes that few people will aspire to God's righteousness because they love Him; most people need the "fear of punishment" to persuade them that conformity to the Law is preferable to nonconformity. The grace in the second use of the Law is that men and women who would not voluntarily seek the holiness demanded by God are helped toward it even against their wills.

It is vital to understand that Calvin deems the third use of the Law to be the most important: the Law guides humans toward the holiness of Christ in Christ.

Calvin's distinctions are useful to Christians in the present debate. Two uses of the Law, the first and third, are specifically religious in character. The use and meaning of the Law in those respects is not appropriate to the public character of a secular state. The second use of the Law, however, points to the condition of human beings in any society: they need rules and a system of rewards and punishments to help them keep those rules. If secularists want to insist that the Ten Commandments be understood only as a historical reference point for Western Civilization, I see no reason to object. If they reject even that, however, then we must fight for the Law, in the words of Heraclitus, "as for the city wall."

My own conclusions coincide substantially with those of Professor Wilken. If, thereby, we have shown Calvin and Luther to be in agreement on the civil uses of the Law, then so much the better.

(The Rev.) Jeffrey Dirk Wilson
Street, Maryland

Robert Louis Wilken responds:
I agree with Jeffrey Dirk Wilson that in fighting "for the city wall" John Calvin is an ally, which is one reason I cited his *Institutes* in my article.

Whose Fundamentalism?

I read with sorrowful fascination Michael Linton's description of *The Handmaid's Tale* ("The Bigot's Opera," November 2003), an opera adapted from Margaret Atwood's novel of the same name. I, too, was deeply wounded by the hatred of Christianity expressed by Ms. Atwood's story, yet I was captured by the descriptions of this potential future.

While reading Professor Linton's description of the new opera, I realize now what I had missed before: Ms. Atwood is describing a world under the grip of fundamentalist Islam, not fundamentalist Christianity. Forced concubinage, illiteracy, the imposition of a smothering garb, and public religious piety hiding debauchery in private—this is the description of life under an Islamic regime as it exists today in countries such as Saudi Arabia.

That is the most frightening thought of all, that Ms. Atwood's vision of a country under religious totalitarianism exists. I weep for the handmaids. May they see freedom, and soon.

Bonnie Ramthun
Erie, Colorado

Michael Linton responds:
Bonnie Ramthun makes a good point. And it's perhaps high irony that such a state is being established not in "fundamentalist" Tennessee or South Carolina but in "liberated" Afghanistan, where a fundamentalist Islamic state, without freedom of religion, is being established with the apparent full blessings of the Bush administration. I wonder if there are any tears over this in the White House.

Mortality in Tolkien

As a lifelong Tolkien fan I read with interest and admiration Anna Mathie's article "Tolkien and the Gift of Mortality" (November 2003). As Ms. Mathie observes, human mortality in *The Lord of the Rings*, when accepted for what it is, ennobles men and gives hobbits a childlike freedom and simplicity. In a draft letter dated 1958, Tolkien himself, a believer in the *felix culpa*, states, "A divine 'punishment' is also a divine 'gift,' if accepted, since its object is ultimate blessing, and the supreme inventiveness of the Creator will make 'punishments' (that is, changes in design) produce a good not otherwise to be attained."

Tolkien was also aware, though, that the view of death as gift, while indeed religious, is not necessarily Christian. In the same letter he writes: "This does not necessarily have anything to say for or against such beliefs as the Christian that 'death' is not part of human nature, but a punishment for sin (rebellion), a result of the 'Fall.'"

Was Tolkien promoting an unchristian mythical worldview regarding human origins? *The Lord of the Rings* is, in fact, rather vague in detailing mankind's understanding of its own mortality, and the "gift" idea is one almost always voiced by elves, as Ms. Matthie indicates. I believe the answer is found in the *History of Middle Earth* series, edited by Christopher Tolkien. In *Volume X: Morgoth's Ring*, there is a previously unpublished manuscript written between 1959 and 1960 relating a dialogue between Finrod Felagund, one of the High Elves who befriended mortal men in the early years of Middle Earth, and Andreth, a wise human versed in the lore of humankind. Their conversation concerns the idea of release from the world as a gift to the human species. Andreth's words gradually reveal that the children of men have a different vision of their own

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nature than the elves do: "We [men] knew that in our beginning we had been born *never to die*. And by that, my lord we meant: *born to life everlasting, without any shadow of any end*." Andreth hints to Felegund that as men understand it, death is the result of some terrible rebellion her distant forefathers had undertaken, to which the Elf exclaims: "Therefore I say that if this can be believed, then mighty indeed under Eru were Men made in their beginning; and dreadful beyond all other calamities was the change in their state."

As Ms. Matthie points out, the reality of physical death causes good men's actions in *The Lord of the Rings* to be motivated by a hope not bound "to the circles of the world." Yet through Andreth's words in *Morgboth's Ring*, Tolkien reveals that there is a more primeval hope at work, involving the very physical world (Arda) from which they are sundered in death:

> "For it was not on the might of Men, or of any of the peoples of Arda, that the old hope was grounded."
>
> "What then was this hope, if you know?" Finrod asked.
>
> "They say," answered Andreth: "they say that the One will himself enter into Arda, and heal Men and all the Marring from the beginning to the end."

Damian Bacich
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

Guilt and the New Evangelism

In his review of Walter Cardinal Kasper's *Leadership in the Church* ("The Meanings of Apostolic," Public Square, November 2003), Richard John Neuhaus cites Cardinal Kasper's contrast between the time of Luther and our time. In Cardinal Kasper's words, "Our experience today is no longer the crushing burden of sin, but the absence of any experience of sin. We have all become more or less Deists, no longer asking: 'How can I do what God expects?' but 'How can I do justice to myself and to my own life?'" Father Neuhaus adds that Cardinal Kasper's "bleak depiction of a thoroughly secularized culture no doubt reflects his own experience of the situation in Germany and Western Europe more generally, which is hardly representative of the larger world."

Fr. Neuhaus knows more about the situation in Western Europe and in the larger world than I do, but I think that the real problem lies in Cardinal Kasper's own understanding of sin. More than thirty years ago, the Roman Catholic theologian James F. McCue and the Lutheran theologian Robert C. Schultz convinced me that the primary question that the Western Church dealt with, from the time of its encounter with paganism in the early centuries until late in the Middle Ages, was a moral one. For the individual Christian, especially as the Western world became "Christianized," this question took the form: "How can I do what God expects?" When a Christian deliberately did what God forbade, or failed to do what He expected, Schultz and McCue asserted, he or she experienced what we call "guilt."

But by the early sixteenth century, Schultz and McCue continued, things were beginning to change. Luther, for example, was still asking, "How can I do what God expects?" when he chose to join the strict order of Augustinian Hermits. In the monastery, however, he soon learned that no matter how hard he tried, he still failed to do what God expects, which is to love God above all things and one's neighbor as oneself. What Luther experienced in this failed effort was not "guilt" but "shame."

Now Luther's question became not "How can I do what God expects?" but "How, having done my best and still failed, can I be assured that I am acceptable and pleasing to God?" Another way to put this question is: "How can I justify myself before God when I have done my best and still failed?" If we are all "more or less Deists," as Cardinal Kasper asserts, then this question surely is related to the question that Cardinal Kasper believes is the modern one: "How can I do justice to myself and to my own life?"

The answer that Luther found, in sacred Scriptures first, and then in scores of Church Fathers, was that one is acceptable and pleasing to God "by grace . . . through faith; and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not because of the works, lest anyone should boast." Good works, Luther came to realize, will flow from this confident trust in God's never-to-be-expected love (see Ephesians 2:8-9).

Fr. Neuhaus and I agree with Cardinal Kasper's conclusion that "at the beginning of a new century and a new millennium, the churches face the ecumenical challenge of a new evangelization." But that new evangelism will surely fail if it ignores the centuries-old Pauline-Augustinian-Lutheran dialectical understanding of the Gospel, which speaks to those who may have little experience of guilt, but know very well what it means to try their best to be a good son or daughter or husband or wife or parent or neighbor or citizen—and still fail.

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THIS TIME

Last Time

James Nuechterlein

My original idea was a quiet exit, entirely without fuss: out the door and back to Indiana. No explanations, no farewells, no summing up. But colleagues and friends objected: people might misunderstand, think I was leaving under duress or in a fit of pique. Since neither of these is the case—my fellow editors insist (at least for the record) that they would rather I stayed and I know I am quite without pique—I had to reconsider. The reason for my hesitation to write about my departure from FT was simple. I had nothing out of the ordinary to say about it. Retirement announcements, I pointed out, are virtually always exercises in banality. "Well," my wife replied, "maybe it's an occasion for banality." (She was charitable enough not to suggest that I had met such occasions before.)

In simplest terms, I'm leaving because it feels like it's time to leave. I'm already a year past the standard retirement age, and I had never assumed I would work much beyond that. With this issue FT completes fourteen years of publication, and fourteen years seems to me a long enough tenure as Editor. I'm not exhausted, but meeting the endless deadlines has become more and more tedious. Better to go before it becomes truly onerous.

There are also signs of ideological malaise. FT is a journal of opinion, and its editors are necessarily involved in the inevitable conflicts of ideas that mark any democratic society's deliberations over how it should arrange its affairs. America is engaged in an ongoing and intense battle of beliefs, and FT stands, broadly speaking, with the cause of cultural conservatism and theological orthodoxy. Those on our side of the barricades are what Peter Steinfels has labeled "counterintellectuals," people who operate in the intellectual world but who do not share the sense of alienation from the dominant values and beliefs of the middle-American majority that is prevalent in that world. My problem is that, while I am happy to be identified as a counterintellectual and am as fully persuaded an adversary of the adversary culture as I have ever been, my enthusiasm for waging the culture war has gradually declined.

A few years back I stopped writing my regular column. I had said what I wanted to say about what seemed to me the most important issues of American politics and culture and, not wishing to repeat myself, was finding it increasingly difficult to find subjects on which to write. The column had become more a journalistic chore than an intellectual challenge. Dorothy Parker famously remarked that she hated writing but loved having written. I found myself resonating more with the former than the latter. I intend in retirement to take on some writing projects, but they will be at my own pace and outside the constraints of the column format.

As with my writing, so also recently with my editorial duties. The arguments I encounter in the manuscripts that arrive on my desk for evaluation and editing seem increasingly familiar. It is rare, or so it seems to me, to find authors who have something new or striking to say about the various items—abortion, judicial activism, gay rights, theological liberalism, radical feminism, deconstruction, postmodernism, moral relativism, church-state relations, etc.—that make up the contemporary neo-Spenglerian litany of decline and fall. I don't feel differently about those issues today than I did yesterday, but the felt imperative to engage them has waned considerably. I don't think of myself as a burnt-out case, but if I stayed around too much longer I would be in imminent danger of becoming precisely that.

I look back on my career at FT with considerable satisfaction, but that satisfaction derives from the experience itself and not from any certainty as to how successful we have been in our efforts. Readers say nice things—sometimes extravagantly nice things—but I am fully aware of an audience of critics who would offer judgments quite to the contrary. I have never been much of a scorekeeper on such matters and am quite content to leave to history final evaluations on how well or badly we have done—and even those evaluations, of course, will depend on who is writing the history. I have always agreed with T. S. Eliot: "For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business."

But if I have no determinate view on how well we have done what we did, I have a quite clear sense of what we—or at least I—had in mind to do at FT's launching in March 1990. We were to be, as noted above, a journal of cultural conservatism and theological orthodoxy, and our audience would perforce be made up mainly of those who shared our preconceptions. But we did not intend merely to preach to the choir. We wanted to provoke as well as reassure. Ours was to be a voice that did not simply reject modernity, but would take it on in critical conversation. We want-

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ed to create a community of editors, writers, and readers who knew the arguments liberal modernity had raised, and, when they rejected those arguments, had thoughtful and sophisticated reasons for doing so. Ours was not the traditionalism of those caught up in fantasies of recovering a utopian past that presumably held sway before everything went wrong at the Enlightenment, or at the advent of nominalism, or whenever. Our traditionalism had come through modernity, not around it. We preferred to avoid identifying ourselves in ideological terms, but from the beginning we were widely—and I think not incorrectly—perceived to be of the neoconservative persuasion.

Finally, a personal word. Over the course of fourteen years, I have worked with a wide range of editorial colleagues. They varied considerably in personality, but they were without exception men and women of intelligence, ability, and dedication. It is a sign of my good fortune that I can make such a blanket statement without equivocation. It is a more remarkable sign of that good fortune that I can add that they were also—again without exception—congenial colleagues. I count them all as friends; some of them I will cherish forever.

So I leave without regret and with an immense sense of gratitude. I am particularly grateful, of course, to RJN, who dreamed up FT in the first place and who is the rare exception to the rule that no one is indispensable. Thanks, friend, for inviting me along for the ride. It's been an incredible run.

Poetry of Witness

"It's just horrible," she said
"and I don't understand why
people didn't form a human chain
and stop the trains from entering the camps.

That's what I'd do," she said.

She wasn't there, of course,
wasn't even born,
but she felt strongly,
repeatedly nodded her head,
wrote a poem
and won an award
instead.

Michael S. Glaser

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Opinion

The Family: Discovering the Obvious

Mary Eberstadt

For many years now, and often inadvertently, secular as well as religious researchers have been amassing facts that, properly understood, bolster the case for the traditional family and against its adversaries and would-be imitators. Some of that evidence, such as the harm to children of the fatherless household, is already widely acknowledged by mainstream writers and readers. Some of it, particularly evidence pertaining to the dark side of homosexuality, remains virtually taboo. When all of it is put together, however, this evidence shows that empirical fact is on the side of the traditional family.

First, a clarification of terms. There are in fact a variety of nontraditional households. I will limit my comments to that subset now posing the most immediate public challenge: the household self-consciously created in contradistinction to the natural family; the household in which the natural family can only be imitated rather than created; the household now demanding not only recognition of some sort from society at large, but also the guarantee of moral equivalence. I suggest that we call this the "antitraditional" household, both to distinguish it from what has gone before and to capture something of its defiant essence. And since such households can further be divided into two variants, heterosexual and homosexual, I propose that we proceed by examining them in turn.

What this distinction immediately makes clear is something interesting and pretty much unnoticed in today's furor over gay marriage: that intellectually speaking, at least, the *heterosexual* variation of the antitraditional household has been steadily losing ground for years now.

I do not mean that heterosexual family formation, *as practiced*, is healthy. Far from it. Abortion, divorce, illegitimacy, pornography, sterilization—these and other plagues on the natural family continue apace. Underlying and sustaining all these separate attacks on the natural family is the fact that contraceptive sex, the deliberate plan to thwart participation in the natural family, is not only widespread but also almost universally accepted in the United States and elsewhere. Considered phenomenologically, the present and future of the natural family in America—for that matter, in much of the world—looks grim indeed.

At the same time, the news isn't all bad. We should recognize one real and important victory for the traditionalist side: there has been a sea change in the way our secular cultural elites now write and talk about nontraditional heterosexual households. Members of this elite may live in such households; they may personally feel such households to be morally equivalent, perhaps even superior, to traditional households; but as a rule they no longer offer full-throated public endorsements of the broken hearth.

That is a major transformation in public life. Only twenty-five years ago, not only the acceptance but the active ideological defense of such households was the intellectual norm among secular educated people. Divorce, it was commonly argued then, is not only a human right but actually better for the child. One parent was said to be at least as good as two. Certain extreme instantiations of the antitraditional household, such as communes and "swinging," were actively defended by mainstream voices and celebrated in stylish mainstream books and magazines. Just two-and-a-half decades ago, in other words, arguments for experimental family life were all on the offensive. Today, by contrast, they are all playing defense. Whether they like it or not, whether they begrudge the fact or not, most people in the public square today have been brought around to recognizing the truth of this proposition: the traditional family, despite its problems, is nonetheless the best arrangement yet contrived for raising children—if only by default.

How did this remarkable shift in secular opinion come about? The answer, in large part, is that the change has been caused by the steady—and ultimately unavoidable—accumulation of empirical evidence testifying to the connections between broken homes and child problems. To cite just a few examples, it was due to the groundbreaking work of Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1964 on the Negro family; the critical research of psychologist Judith Wallerstein over several decades on the deleterious effects of divorce on children; Barbara Defoe Whitehead's famous 1993 *Atlantic Monthly* piece (followed by a book) entitled "Dan Quayle was Right"; David Blankenhorn's 1994 book, *Fatherless America*; James Q. Wilson's *The Marriage Problem*; Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher's *The Case for Marriage*; and many other revisionist articles and books

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that have followed their lead. These and other writers made the case for the traditional family on largely secular grounds; and in so doing, they have remade the way secular people think about it.

I do not mean that this view has now "won"; manifestly it has not. What I do mean is that it cannot now be ignored. This brings us to an apparent paradox: even as advocates of the *heterosexual* antitraditional household have been forced into some measure of intellectual retreat, advocates of the *homosexual* antitraditional household have meanwhile gone from strength to strength.

On inspection, of course, this is not really a paradox at all. The reasons for the success of the homosexual antitraditionalists are plain enough. First, the more deformed heterosexual unions have become, the more they have begun to resemble homosexual unions (and vice versa). It is hard to fault homosexuals for thwarting the plan of creation at a time when so many heterosexuals busy themselves with exactly that. Allow me to quote Patrick Fagan, who distills the argument into a single sentence: "If one no longer considers childbearing part of the nature of the sexual act, and if married heterosexuals claim childless sex as a 'right'—they have and the Supreme Court long ago upheld it—then it is difficult to deny this 'right' to those whose sexual acts always preclude children—that is, homosexuals." This is, of course, exactly what has happened, as some gay rights activists themselves acutely understand.

Second, homosexual antitraditionalists have also benefited from another moral catastrophe—the ongoing priest scandal in the Catholic Church. It is hard to make the case for the sanctity of marriage, at least with a straight face, when a fair number of priests are caught prowling for teenage boys. The entire institution of the Church, and not only the offenders, has suffered from this dissonance. A demoralized clergy, like a demoralized laity, has little with which to fight claims of homosexual moral equivalence—or anything else.

And here is where facts enter the picture. For even as the celebrations of gay rights roar on, reality glowers in the corner like an unwanted guest. For the argument that homosexuality is "virtually normal"—the argument, that is, on which the gay rights and gay marriage activists have so far won—is a hypothesis that is not only wrong on theological grounds but also as a matter of established fact. By "fact" I mean by the most secular sources imaginable: social science, medical science, psychological studies, and more—including sources overtly friendly to the normalization of gay rights.

None of that evidence, of course, will surprise those who actually minister to homosexual persons from a traditionalist perspective. But this same evidence is almost entirely unknown, because culturally verboten, throughout the secular world, and particularly among our secular elites; it is as studiously ignored in our own time as, say, evidence about family breakdown was in the early 1960s.

One problem from which homosexuals suffer in disproportionate numbers is chemical addiction—alcoholism and the related abuse of licit or illicit drugs. This propensity to addiction, while endemic to all of modern society, is ubiquitously documented to be worse among lesbians and gays. Virtually every study one can find on the subject confirms it. As the *Gay Community News* notes, "The statistics do point to the gay community, particularly gay men, as being most at risk of becoming alcoholics." Their observation is confirmed by numerous other sources, including a prominent gay website (*glbthealth.org*), which admits the fact that "alcohol, drug, and tobacco use all occur at significantly higher rates in the GLBT community than in the general population." Gay Alcoholics Anonymous groups abound in many localities—an interesting detail, given the numerically small proportion represented by the gay population. Numerous sources also report higher levels of illicit drug use and addiction among gays. Consider as emblematic the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, which devoted an entire recent issue to the subject of addictions in the gay and lesbian community.

Another problem also widespread in modern society, and also afflicting gay men and women disproportionately, is the cluster of mental disorders known generally as "depression." These problems also appear at significantly higher rates in the homosexual than the heterosexual population. Here is a representative quote from a recent article in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*—no socially conservative rag, that—summarizing what other studies also conclude: "The levels of depression and anxiety in our homosexual subjects, whether HIV positive or HIV negative, are substantially higher than those found in representative general population samples."

These higher rates of mental affliction correlate with another widely agreed upon fact: that suicide is far more likely among homosexuals than among heterosexuals. In a famous study published in 1978, for example, researchers Alan Bell and Martin Weinberg found that 18 percent of white homosexual males reported at least one suicide attempt (as opposed to three percent of white heterosexual males). Remember that Bell and Weinberg, like the other sources I quote, were overtly sympathetic to the normalization of

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homosexuality. Here as elsewhere in the pro-gay literature, however, the facts about gay suicide quietly contradict the "virtually normal" polemics that typically accompany them.

More recently, attention to the population of underage boys self-identifying as "gay" has produced evidence of the same tragic pattern. Allow me to quote from a recent letter in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Nearly one-third of gay teens drop out of school annually, three times the national average. Gay and lesbian youth are three times more likely to attempt suicide than other youth." The authors of this letter, incidentally, do not work for the Family Research Council; they are founders of the Harvey Milk School for gay teenagers in New York City.

Another distinguishing characteristic of homosexuality that emerges from nearly all the literature on the subject, and what I believe to be the most underexamined fact of all, is this: homosexual men are significantly more likely—some researchers would say, much more likely—than heterosexual men to have been sexually abused or exploited as children and adolescents. According to a 1998 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, "Abused adolescents, particularly those victimized by males, were up to seven times more likely to self-identify as gay or bisexual than peers who have not been abused."

The gay activist response to such problematic evidence is familiar enough: that what "drives" gay men and boys to such behaviors is "homophobia," or the refusal of society to accept them as they are. And herein, I believe, lies the hidden weakness of gay activism today, and by extension the eventual fate of the gay antitraditional household. For the closer society moves to the moral-equivalent view of homosexuality, the harder it becomes to blame the endemic problems of gay men on the "homophobic" rest of the world.

Sooner or later, someone is going to ask why, if being gay is cause for celebration, gay boys and men continue to kill themselves at significantly higher rates than do heterosexuals. Sooner or later, someone is going to wonder why, despite society's open arms, virtually every study of gay mental health shows higher rates of depression, alcoholism, sexual addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, and the rest.

This is the evidence ignored by, for example, judges who place children in gay-headed households. It is also the evidence ignored by everyone who argues that homosexuality has nothing to do with sex scandals involving young boys. It is also the evidence that will not go away. The empirical reality of much of gay life contradicts the rhetoric of virtual normality; and eventually, it seems safe to predict, the twain shall meet.

When that happens, the advocates of the homosexual antitraditional household will find themselves on the intellectual defensive—as the advocates of the heterosexual antitraditional household are today. This does not mean that gay men and women will wear lavender letters on their sleeves and be thrust from the public square back into the closet, any more than divorced or unwed people are ostracized today. But it does mean that today's euphoria over the antitraditional homosexual household will someday seem as antiquated, and as problematic for the children of those households, as does the hippie bliss of yesterday.

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Children at Risk

W. Bradford Wilcox

At first glance, *Hardwired to Connect*, the recent report from the Commission on Children at Risk, a group of thirty-three children's doctors, research scientists, and youth services professionals, might be viewed as yet another harbinger of social decay. The report, jointly sponsored by the Dartmouth Medical School, the YMCA, and the Institute for American Values, documents dramatic declines in the welfare of adolescents over the last half century—to the point where approximately 20 percent of all adolescents suffer from serious emotional or behavioral problems, from depression to delinquency.

Take suicide. From 1955 to 1990, the suicide rate for adolescents aged fifteen to nineteen more than quadrupled from 2.7 per 100,000 to 11.1 per 100,000. Moreover, larger numbers of adolescents now report considering suicide—in fact, by 2001, almost 20 percent of high school students had entertained such thoughts.

As the report suggests, suicide trends are important for two reasons. First, suicide is a dramatic and obvious indicator of a lack of psychological well-being among teens. These suicide trends reflect the marked decline in psychological well-being adolescents have experienced over the last half century. Since the 1960s,

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depression, anxiety, drug abuse, and delinquency have all risen precipitously among teenagers.

Second, as Emile Durkheim observed over a century ago, suicide is an excellent barometer of the overall health of our social life. When adolescents are integrated into what this report describes as "authoritative communities"—religious institutions, intact families, and other civic institutions serving children (such as the YMCA)—they think life is worth living. These communities provide them with a sense of belonging and with moral and spiritual meaning that lends their lives purpose and hope. When adolescents have no ties, or only attenuated ties, to authoritative communities, they lose hope and become vulnerable to a range of social and psychological pathologies, including suicide.

So, how have authoritative communities fared in recent years in the United States? The sobering reality is that authoritative communities have not done so well over the last half-century. The family, which the report correctly notes is "the first and most basic association of civil society," has been battered and buffeted in recent years. In particular, increases in divorce and unwed childbearing since the 1960s have left an indelible mark on the lives of millions of children. As a consequence of these changes, fewer and fewer children go to bed at night in a home that they share with mother and father. In the 1950s, almost 80 percent of children spent their entire lives in an intact family, whereas in the 1990s only about 50 percent of children spent their entire childhood with their biological mother and father. Children who grow up outside an intact family are more than twice as likely to experience serious psychological or social problems as their peers who grow up in intact families.

Taking a page from Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*, the report notes that other authoritative communities in civil society—e.g., religious institutions, Parent Teacher Associations, and YMCAs—have lost ground over the last half century. For instance, the percentage of Americans attending religious services in any given week fell from 49 percent in 1958 to 43 percent in 1990. The decline was more precipitous among teenagers: weekly religious attendance among high school seniors fell from 40 percent in the late 1970s to 31 percent in 1991. Because religious institutions provide moral meaning, spiritual sustenance, and social support to parents and adolescents, and because religious participation is associated with the social and psychological health of adolescents, there is strong prima facie evidence that the secularization of American life has helped fuel the downward spiral in social and psychological well-being among adolescents. (Full disclosure: as a member of the Commission on Children at Risk, I helped to frame the report's treatment of religion.)

These trends are especially sobering because declines in familial and civic life have been concentrated in low-income neighborhoods where too many residents are afflicted by what Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution calls "behavioral" poverty. By that she means that many residents of these neighborhoods do not finish high school, do not work full-time, and do not marry before having children. Authoritative communities—especially family and nonreligious civic institutions—are weakest in these neighborhoods.

Consider family trends. Only five percent of college-educated women will have a child outside the bonds of wedlock. Nearly 20 percent of women with a high school education or less will have a child outside wedlock. Divorce is also much more prevalent among the poor. Thus, the rural and urban poor are much less likely to marry and stay married than their middle- and upper-class peers, therefore losing out on the social, economic, and moral benefits of marriage.

In many low-income urban communities, churches are often the only civic institutions with any real presence. Nonetheless, even churches located in poor neighborhoods are losing their ties to the poor in their communities, as they increasingly find their pews filled by working-class commuters who drive into the city from the suburbs for Sunday services. As R. Drew Smith of Morehouse College has observed, largely because of a growing moral and geographic divide between the church-going working class and the unchurched urban poor, "there appears to be substantial social distance between the urban poor and faith institutions."

The sad irony is that the withering of familial, religious, and civic life is happening in precisely the communities that can least afford it. Research by Daniel Lichter at Ohio State University indicates that women from low-income communities who manage to marry and stay married have virtually the same risk of poverty as women who marry in more affluent communities. In other words, a good marriage virtually eliminates the material consequences of growing up poor for these women.

The work of Byron Johnson at Baylor University indicates that churches are especially valuable in promoting good outcomes among at-risk youth, precisely because these young people do not enjoy the material and social resources that youth in middle- and upper-class communities do. Johnson found, for instance, that children living in poor communities

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who attend church regularly are less likely to use drugs than unchurched youth living in middle- and upper-class communities.

The picture painted by *Hardwired to Connect* may seem dark. But the report ultimately gives reason for optimism. To begin with, adolescent well-being seems to have stabilized and, in some respects, improved, during the 1990s. In the last decade, for instance, child poverty, adolescent suicide, teen sex, and juvenile arrest rates have all fallen.

These improvements parallel stabilizing trends in family and religion over this same period. In the late 1990s, divorce rates continued a decline begun earlier, the percentage of children in two-parent families increased slightly, and, for the first time in years, opinion polls indicated that more married Americans are "very happy" in their marriages. According to Gallup data, weekly religious attendance among U.S. adults held steady at around 42 percent in the 1990s, and other survey data indicate that attendance among high school seniors also held steady at 31 percent. Perhaps it is a coincidence that the very institutions that address adolescents' fundamental needs for belonging, moral purpose, and transcendent meaning have seen their fortunes improve at the same time that adolescent well-being has taken a turn for the better. But I doubt it. Taken together, these trends suggest that our social free fall is slowing down or even beginning to reverse itself.

The report also suggests a parallel development among elites. In 1992, Irving Kristol wrote that the "left today completely dominates the education establishment, the entertainment establishment, the universities, the media. One of these days the tide will turn." Indeed, there are indications that just such a turn of the intellectual tide has finally begun at some of our nation's top universities, not to the right but towards a refreshing willingness to grapple with our toughest social problems in a probing and open-minded manner. Virtually every member of the Commission on Children at Risk holds an academic position at a top private or public university—from Harvard to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Only a handful of conservatives were represented on the commission. Yet the commission concluded, rightly, that the intact, two-parent family and religion play a central role in promoting the social and psychological welfare of children, precisely because that is what the best social scientific evidence tells us.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the report's intellectual honesty is that it goes beyond classic sociological and political accounts of the positive role that authoritative communities play in the lives of adolescents (and adults) by arguing that the "human person is hardwired to connect to other people and to moral and spiritual meaning." In other words, human connections to family and God are rooted not only in enduring social needs but also in the biological makeup of the human person. The report notes, for example, that adolescent girls who live with their biological fathers experience puberty later than girls who live with unrelated adult males—for instance, a stepfather or a mother's boyfriend. Not surprisingly, girls in the former group are more likely to postpone sex than girls in the latter group. The intact family, then, has both sociological and biological value to girls moving towards adulthood.

Similarly, the report stresses the social and biological functions that religion serves among adolescents. Adolescence is a time when the brain seems most primed to address fundamental questions about life and death, ultimate meaning, and the supernatural. During adolescence, for instance, the prefrontal cortex—a region that neuroscientists have linked to religious experiences—undergoes marked developmental changes. Not surprisingly, adolescents who manage to connect or remain connected to God during this time of change are significantly more likely to believe that life has meaning and purpose than their peers who do not report a "direct personal relationship with the Divine." And adolescents who do not feel strongly connected to God, and who do not enjoy a community of fellow believers, are much more likely to turn to alcohol, drugs, and deviance to fill the hole in their lives.

The Commission's willingness to acknowledge the biological and social power of faith, family, and community on the well-being of the young gives reason for guarded optimism about academia's future (at least in the social and hard sciences). Indeed, a small but growing number of left-leaning scholars at such institutions as Harvard (Robert Putnam), Princeton (Sara McLanahan), the University of Chicago (Linda Waite), and the University of Virginia (Steven Nock) are regularly entering the public square to talk about the important role that religion, marriage, and civic participation play in fostering the common good. Their willingness to speak up on behalf of the unvarnished truth suggests that hegemonic liberalism is on the wane.

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True Fictions of Fatherhood

Noah Millman

About two-and-a-half years ago, my wife and I sat in a lawyer's office trying not to think too deeply about the decision we were then making: to seek to adopt a child. As we sat there, listening to the litany of options for how to bring home a stranger's baby, a joke occurred to me. What is the difference between families today and families a century ago? A century ago, to start a family you'd hire a professional to find you a spouse, and by doing what comes naturally you'd make a baby. Today, to start a family you go about doing what comes naturally in hopes of finding a spouse, and then hire a professional to find you a baby. About fifteen months later, such a baby came home with us. For fifteen more months, we lived with him as legal guardians, but not as legal parents. And now what has been true in our eyes from the beginning, and in his, is true in the eyes of Kings County and the State of New York: he is legally our son. By a judge's handshake, I am made the boy's father.

Our lawyer told us that usually in couples seeking to adopt, it's the wife who is eager and pushing and the husband who is aloof and anxious. That's certainly in accord with the nostrums of evolutionary psychology; we men are supposed to dread spending our precious resources raising another man's child. But it wasn't that way with us. I was the one who rushed to the phone every time we got a call that might be "the call." I knew I wanted to be a father, and this looked like the way it was going to happen, if it was going to happen at all.

I say I wanted to be a father, but that doesn't quite capture it. I have very nearly made an idol of fatherhood, and worshiped it. In this, I think I am only in tune with the times. My ancestors worshiped the empty space above the cherubic throne, and so it seems entirely fitting to me to worship an absence—above all in this age of fatherlessness.

I am not the first to build such an idol. There is a passage from Joyce's *Ulysses* upon which I have increasingly meditated. "Fatherhood," Stephen Daedalus declares, "in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man."

> It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On that mystery and not on the Madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the Church is founded and founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro- and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. *Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction. Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son?

For me, of course, paternity is quite literally a legal fiction. Joyce appears to be talking about the uncertainty of fatherhood—who knows, absolutely, that he is the father?—but that's not what I take from this passage. Incertitude, unlikelihood: the point is not that we don't know *for sure* but that another man might be father; the point is that fatherhood is not a gnosis, but an act of faith, a willingness to believe that this separate being is of ourselves when we never carried it.

My will to believe, though, is not an act of law. Customs vary with respect to adoption. In ancient Egypt, if a property owner had no heir, he might go into the slave market and purchase a young boy, and raise him as his son. There is an echo of this practice in Abraham's lament to God (Genesis 15:2) that, seeing as he had no children, his servant, Eliezer, would inherit his property. And in a far stronger echo, when the God of Israel says to Moses, "I will take you [Israel] to Myself as a nation, and I will be to you as a God" (Exodus 6:7), the text is using the formula for an Egyptian adoption. God is, effectively, purchasing Israel in the slave markets of Egypt and adopting it as a son.

Adoption was also a Roman custom, and it worked in like fashion: if a man had no heirs, he could buy one in a slave market. And if a noble or ruler wished to pass on his property and title to a nonlineal descendant, he would adopt the chosen heir as a son (as Julius Caesar did to Octavius, for example).

But adoption is not universally known. In British common law, for example, title can pass only to an heir of blood, not an adoptee. If you are the twenty-third baronet of Mortshire, you cannot pass your baronetcy to the street urchin you took in thirty years ago and raised as if he were your son. Rather, if you have no legitimate descendants, the title will pass to the nearest heir through the line of your younger brother.

So, too, in Israel, where, as a formal legal matter, there is no concept of adoption. It is, of course, an enormous act of *chesed*, of loving-kindness, to raise another man's child as if it were one's own. And, according to the Talmud, the child is obligated to regard you as a parent, to obey you and respect you as

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such and mourn you as such upon your passing, and is to be referred to in public as your child—all because you provided for his or her education and well-being. But you do not, by your deed of righteousness, make the child your own as a matter of law. If a *cohen* (priest) raises a boy as his son, the boy will not have the privileges nor the constraints of the priesthood. The inheritance of blood cannot be altered by an act of man.

The closest Judaism comes to a notion of adoption, or to its ceremonies, is the conversion ceremony, whereby an individual (including a child or even an infant) is effectively adopted by the entire Jewish people (and by God), and is, in the eyes of the law, literally transformed into a Jew. But this is not really an act of man. With the immersion in the *mikvah*, the child's status is transformed by God. And, should the child repent of the conversion when he or she is of age, the reversion to another faith is not considered apostasy; it is as if the conversion never occurred.

I'm of two minds about all this. On the one hand, I believe, absolutely, that I now have a son. He knows no other father (and no other mother but my wife). I have no other children, but if I did, I cannot imagine treating them differently. The notion that I am doing a deed of kindness to a stranger is not what I feel; I feel him, unequivocally, to be my own son.

And yet I appreciate something about the fact that Judaism will not give *me* the power to make this a fact rather than a fiction. It is no accident, I think, that both in Egypt and in Rome adoption was linked to slavery. There is no more essential tie than that of blood, and no more terrible crime in slavery than the alienation of blood from blood, the sundering of parents from their children. The power of an Egyptian or Roman slave owner to purchase a child and raise him to the level of himself is, in a way, god-like. It is a power that no man should have over another man. And there is a little part of me that worries about any law, however founded on our sovereign freedom, that would arrogate to itself the authority to create fathers and mothers of paper.

So I return to Joyce and my idolatry of fatherhood. Am I so different from other fathers? Are any of us more than legal fictions? Aeschylus has Apollo outrageously argue (as part of his defense of Orestes) that *motherhood* is a fiction; that wombs are but the soil in which fathers plant the seed (and therefore matricide is really a garden-variety murder, not an incestuous killing). But he's arguing before Athena, a motherless judge, so perhaps it's understandable that such a lunatic assertion could be persuasive to her. To us, this is madness, and Joyce's formulation fitter. Mothers *know*. Fathers *believe*. Does that make us less? Perhaps. But perhaps it also makes us more.

I know I am a fiction. And never has a happier fiction walked the earth. Let God retain the power of making men and women, and of making mothers and fathers. For myself, I rest content that, at the end of God's afternoon of matchmaking, just before He breaks off work to play with His pet Leviathan, He takes a few moments to make matches of our own odd kind, joining lost children to their *true* fictive fathers, and mothers.

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The Hidden Life

For the poet Dana Gioia,
upon his taking a public office.

Sometimes on evening walks you hear,
in whispers from old wells
and almost-words that rivers speak,
a quiet voice that tells
of small, secluded things. Like murmured
prayers from churchmen's stalls
or what the marbled echoes say,
it rises, then it falls.
And you may follow when it calls

or you may think to wait. The green
at dusk seems deeper than
the green at dawn. Beyond the gate
a garden opens on
long shadows overgrown with leaves
and lilac nunneries,
between the gravel paths, where sparrows
seek their tenebraes.
And you may follow, if you please,

or keep to public streets. Against
the bruit of busy day,
the private houses close their eyes.
A few small panes betray
high bookshelves in a firelit room,
a woman sweeping floors,
a glimpse of some unknowing boy
at work at evening chores.
And you may follow, through those doors,

or you may turn aside. In lines
of black between the flames,
a fire writes against its light.
Dry hopes, forgotten fames,
the traceless works of childless men:
All printed there to read.
The cinders spell the deeper night,
dark need inside dark need.
And you may follow where they lead

or you may look away.

Joseph Bottum

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Europe's Problem—and Ours

George Weigel

Go back in your mind's eye to the fall of 1940, the fateful period that Winston Churchill called Britain's "finest hour." Having subdued the Low Countries and France, Adolf Hitler now turned his attention to the last remaining democratic power in Europe. Hermann Göring convinced Hitler that Britain could be bludgeoned into submission on the cheap, so the *Luftwaffe* unleashed a fierce aerial blitz intended to break the British will to resist. Night after night, London burned. One of the most famous photographs from those desperate weeks was a nocturnal silhouette of St. Paul's Cathedral, its great dome standing strong and unshaken against the smoke and fire swirling through the City of London. That grainy photograph stirs the emotions to this day, because it captures in one brilliant image the struggle of Western Civilization against the barbarism that seemed on the verge of overwhelming it.

Now, turn your mind's eye two generations forward. About forty-five years after the Blitz, Mikhail Gorbachev, then the newly chosen general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, visited London on one of his first trips abroad. As part of the hospitality extended to Gorbachev and his party, they were taken to visit St. Paul's Cathedral. As I recall the story, after touring Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece Gorbachev turned to the Verger, one of the cathedral officials, and said, "A most interesting building. What is it used for today?" To which the Verger replied, "In order, sir, to worship God."

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A decade later, I was in London to lecture and looked up a young Czech seminarian studying at Heythrop College who had been helpful when I was doing research in Prague on the Catholic Church's role in the collapse of European communism. I asked my young friend what he wanted to see, and he mentioned that he hadn't yet visited St. Paul's. So we took the Tube to the City and went to the cathedral. To my surprise, I discovered that one could no longer enter St. Paul's without paying an entrance fee. Yes, Christian worship continued at the cathedral church of the Diocese of London. But on a Saturday afternoon in January 1995, it had been turned into a museum.

St. Paul's in defiance of the Nazi blitz, St. Paul's confounding the leader of Soviet communism, and St. Paul's become an architectural museum: these three vignettes come to mind when I try to understand what has happened in Western Europe and what has happened to Western Europe in recent decades—and when I try to understand why Europe's approach to democracy and to the responsibilities of the democracies in world politics seems so different from many Americans' understanding of these issues. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and particularly in the debate that preceded the Iraq War of 2003, Americans became acutely aware that there is a "European problem." (Interestingly enough, so do at least some Europeans, including some European intellectuals, among them, as we shall see, two prominent French political philosophers.)

My proposal is that, at its most fundamental level, this "European problem" is best understood in moral and cultural terms. My further suggestion is that the

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"problem" is not just one besetting our European friends and allies; their "European problem" is our problem, too.

Over the past year, the most widely discussed American analysis of America's European problem and Europe's America problem has been that advanced by Robert Kagan in his book *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (Knopf, 2003). In a line from his book that he may have subsequently come to view with a measure of chagrin, Kagan argues that "on major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus." However fetching such a characterization may be in a sound-bite world, it does scant justice to the seriousness of Kagan's argument.

To begin with, Kagan understands that not all Europeans are Venusians—Tony Blair comes to mind—nor, needless to say, are all Americans Martians. Yet Kagan insists that these stereotypes disclose important truths. The United States and Western Europe have different strategic visions: different understandings of how the world works, different understandings of the nature of power, different understandings of the causes of conflict in the world, different views of the role of international legal and political organizations in managing conflict, and different perceptions of the utility of military power in securing peace, freedom, and order in world affairs—and that's before we get to the policy differences that separate the United States and Europe on issues such as the path to peace in the Middle East, the International Criminal Court, the rebuilding of Iraq, and so forth.

Kagan suggests that these dramatically different strategic visions are not the by-products of national character, reminding us of Europe's bellicose past and America's traditional nervousness about international power politics and entangling alliances. Rather, on Kagan's view, these different strategic visions are the product of a vast disparity of military power between the United States and Europe. That power gap did not just happen, though; the disparity in military strength between the U.S. and Europe is itself the product of an ideological gap between "Old Europe" and the United States—what Kagan terms "a different set of ideals and principles regarding the utility and morality of power." The ideological gap, in turn, is based on a different set of experiences in the twentieth century.

The devastation of their continent by two world wars; the continent's division during a Cold War that, had it broken out into hot war, would likely have destroyed Europe; the longer European experience of vulnerability to terrorism—all of this, Kagan suggests, has led Europeans to a different set of perceptions about the threats to peace and freedom at work in the twenty-first century world. Moreover, these experiences have led Europeans to the conviction that security threats can and should be met, in the main, not by traditional applications of "hard power" but by the further refinement of international legal and political instruments of conflict resolution. The most enthusiastic European "Venusians," like European Commission president and former Italian prime minister Romano Prodi, see the present European Union as the model, indeed the prefigurement, of a world run by "soft power." As Prodi put it in a May 2001 speech, in Europe, "the rule of law has replaced the crude interplay of power [and] power politics have lost their influence; [therefore, by] making a success of [European] integration we are demonstrating to the world that it is possible to create a method for peace." This, Kagan suggests, has become Europe's new *mission civilisatrice*: Europe is to bring to the world the fulfillment of Immanuel Kant's vision of "perpetual peace."

Kagan understands that Europe's passion for this new mission is in part a function of the fear-that-dare-not-speak-its-name: namely, that if the experience of an integrated, peaceful, post–Cold War Europe *isn't* universalizable, then it might not be a settled accomplishment for Europe, either. And that is to think the unthinkable in circumstances in which, as Kagan puts it, "the French are still not confident they can trust the Germans, and the Germans are still not sure they can trust themselves." That, in turn, helps explain why Europe's integration—originally intended to create a European superpower and an independent European foreign and defense policy—has gone hand-in-hand with a drastic decline, absolutely and relatively, in Europe's "hard power" capabilities. There are many ironies in the fire here, and Kagan neatly sums them up:

> Europe's rejection of power politics, its devaluing of military force as a tool of international relations, have depended on the presence of American military forces on European soil. Europe's new Kantian order could flourish only under the umbrella of American power exercised according to the rules of the old Hobbesian order. American power made it possible for Europeans to believe that power was no longer important. And now, in the final irony, the fact that United States military power has solved the European problem, especially the "German question," allows Europeans today to believe that American military power, and the "strategic culture" that has created and sustained it, are outmoded and dangerous.

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And that, in Kagan's view, leads to a "great paradox," namely, that Europe's emergence into post-history has been made possible by the fact that the United States still lives *in* history: "Because Europe has neither the will nor the ability to guard its own paradise and keep it from being overrun, spiritually as well as physically, by a world that has yet to accept the rule of 'moral consciousness,' it has become dependent on America's willingness to use its military might to deter or defeat those around the world who still believe in power politics."

All of which shows, I hope, that Kagan does his argument insufficient justice when he reduces it to a matter of Martians vs. Venusians.

Yet I would also suggest that Kagan doesn't push his analysis deep enough. Nor is the problem rectified if one adds to Kagan's political-military analysis a familiar liberal moral-psychological codicil: that Europeans, ashamed of a twentieth-century history of colonialism, fascism, and appeasement, have eagerly embraced the "end of politics" imagined by Romano Prodi and others in a this-worldly quest for absolution.

Yes, Western Europeans see the world differently, and thus have ordered their institutions, their politics, and their national budgets differently. Yes, that different vision of the world and its possibilities is the product of experiences unlike those Americans underwent in the twentieth century. Yes, Europeans can find some historical warrant for believing a world of perpetual peace is possible in Kant's idealism (and I mean "idealism" in both its philosophical and psychological senses).

But why did Europe turn out this way? Why did Europeans learn these things from their experience? And why have these lessons taken the political and ideological forms they have?

Why, in the aftermath of 1989, did so many Europeans fail to condemn communism as a moral and political monstrosity? Why was the only politically acceptable judgment on communism the anodyne observation that it "didn't work"?

Why, to come to the present, do European statesmen insist on defending certain fictions in world politics: like the fiction that Yassir Arafat is interested in peace with Israel; or the fiction that the Kyoto Protocol would be rigorously observed by the nations that signed it; or the fiction that there is something meaningfully describable in *political* terms as an "international community," the highest expression of which is the UN Security Council as presently configured?

Why is Europe retreating from democracy and binding itself ever tighter with the cords of bureaucracy?

Why do European states find it virtually impossible to make hard domestic political decisions—as on the length of the work week or the funding of pensions?

Why do European courts seek an expanded international jurisdiction that defies the democratic decisions of free people in other countries, as in the Pinochet case?

Why is Europe on the way to what French political philosopher Pierre Manent calls "depoliticization"? Why, as Manent puts it, does Europe "[drug] itself with humanitarianism in order to forget that it exists less and less politically"? Why does Manent have "the impression today that the greatest ambition of Europeans is to become the inspectors of American prisons"?

Why have many of Europe's political leaders insisted that the new Constitution for Europe include a deliberate act of historical amnesia, in which a millennium and a half of Christianity's contributions to the European understanding of human rights and democracy are airbrushed from the continent's political memory?

Why are so many European public intellectuals "Christophobic," as international legal scholar J. H. H. Weiler (himself an observant Jew) puts it? Why is European high culture so enamored of the present and so contemptuous of both religious and secular tradition, as French philosopher Rémi Brague has pointed out?

Above all, and most urgently of all, why is Europe systematically depopulating itself? Why is Europe committing demographic suicide? Why does no Western European country have a replacement-level birthrate? Why will Spain's population likely decline from 40 million to 31.3 million by the middle of the century? Why will 42 percent of Italians be over age sixty by 2050? What is happening when an entire continent, wealthier and healthier than ever before, declines to create the human future in the most elemental sense, by producing a next generation? Why will Europeans not admit that these demographics—which are without parallel in human history, absent wars, plagues, or natural catastrophes—are the defining reality of their twenty-first century?

These questions cannot be answered satisfactorily by reference only to Europe's distinct experience of the twentieth century and what Europe learned from it, or by European shame. Deeper questions have to be raised: Why did Europe have the twentieth century it did? Why did a century that began with confident predictions about a maturing humanity reaching new heights of civilizational accomplishment produce, within four decades, two world wars, three totalitarian systems, a Cold War threatening global catastrophe, oceans of blood, mountains of corpses, Auschwitz and the Gulag? What *happened*? And why?

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Over the course of twelve years of research and teaching in east-central Europe, I've been impressed by what might be called the Slavic view of history. You can find it in a great thinker who lived on the borderland between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, Vladimir Soloviev, with his religious and moral challenge to the fashionable nihilism and materialism of the late nineteenth century. You can find it in the novelists, poets, and playwrights of Polish Romanticism—Henryk Sienkiewicz, Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Slowacki, Cyprian Kamil Norwid—who broke decisively with the Jacobin conviction that "revolution" means a complete rupture with the past, insisting by contrast that genuine "revolution" means the recovery of lost spiritual and moral values. You can find it in Karol Wojtyla, later Pope John Paul II, and in such intellectual leaders of the anti-Communist resistance in east-central Europe as Václav Havel and Václav Benda—all of whom believed that "living in the truth" could change what seemed unchangeable in history.

The common thread running through these disparate thinkers is the conviction that the deepest currents of history are spiritual and cultural, rather than political and economic. In this way of thinking, history is not simply the by-product of the contest for power in the world—although power certainly plays an important role in it. And neither is history the exhaust fumes produced by the means of production. Rather, history is driven, over the long haul, by culture—by what men and women honor, cherish, and worship; by what societies deem to be true and good, and by the expressions they give to those convictions in language, literature, and the arts; by what individuals and societies are willing to stake their lives on.

Poland is one embodiment of this way of thinking, which Poles believe has been vindicated empirically by their own modern history. In 1795, with the Third Polish Partition, the great powers of the region—Russia, Prussia, Austria-Hungary—completed the vivisection of a political community whose origins went back to the last years of the first millennium of Christian history; thus for one 123 years, from 1795 to 1918, the Polish state was erased from Europe. Yet during that century-and-a-quarter in which you could not find "Poland" on any map of Europe—a time in which the Russians and Prussians, in particular, made strenuous efforts to eradicate the idea of "Poland"—the Polish nation survived. Indeed, the Polish nation survived with such vigor that it could give birth to a new Polish state in 1918. And despite the fact that the Polish state was beset for fifty years by the plagues of Nazism and communism, the Polish nation proved strong enough to give a new birth to freedom in east-central Europe in the Revolution of 1989.

How did this happen? Poland survived—better, Poland prevailed—because of culture: a culture formed by a distinctive language (Slavic, yet written in a Latin alphabet and thus oriented to the West as well as the East); by a unique literature, which helped keep alive the memory and idea of "Poland"; and by the intensity of its Catholic faith. Poles know in their bones that culture is what drives history over the long haul.

To call this a "Slavic view of history" reflects the principal location of this body of thought over the past two hundred years or so. In fact, though, it is really a classically Christian way of thinking about history, whose roots can be traced back at least as far as St. Augustine and *The City of God*. In the English-speaking world of the twentieth century, the most distinguished exponent of this culture-driven view of history was Christopher Dawson. As Dawson once put it in one of the most cited passages from his voluminous body of work, St. Paul's passage from Troy in Asia Minor to Philippi on the European mainland did more to shape the future of European culture and European history than anything recorded by the great historians of his day—because it took place "underneath the surface" of history, such that those who even noticed that an itinerant rabbi from Tarsus had come to Europe and was preaching another king than Caesar couldn't grasp the significance of what was being said.

In any case, it is the Slavs who have been the most powerful exponents of this "culture-first" understanding of the dynamics of the world's story in our time. One such Slavic reader of the signs of the times, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, brought this optic on history to bear on the "European problem" in his 1983 Templeton Prize Lecture. Parsing the horrors of the twentieth century, Solzhenitsyn found a historical trapgate in the First World War:

> The failings of human consciousness, deprived of its divine dimension, have been a determining factor in all the major crimes of this century. The first of these was World War I, and much of our present predicament can be traced back to it. That war . . . took place when Europe, bursting with health and abundance, fell into a rage of self-mutilation that could not but sap its strength for a century or more, and perhaps forever. The only possible explanation for this is a mental eclipse among the leaders of Europe due to their lost awareness of a Supreme Power above them. . . . Only the loss of that higher intuition which comes from God could have allowed the West to accept calmly, after World War I, the protracted agony of Russia as she was being torn apart by

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a band of cannibals. . . . The West did not perceive that this was in fact the beginning of a lengthy process that spells disaster for the whole world.

As the twentieth century gave way to the twenty-first, the "disaster" Solzhenitsyn foresaw had been avoided, at least in the form of nuclear holocaust. But that does not diminish the salience of Solzhenitsyn's chief point—that 1914-1918 marked the beginning of a civilizational crisis in Europe, and perhaps especially in Western Europe, whose effects are much with us today. Indeed, in trying to get a satisfactory answer to several of the questions I raised above, including the most pressing question of Europe's demographic self-destruction, I can think of no better answer than the one suggested by Solzhenitsyn's analysis: these phenomena are the expression of a profound, longstanding crisis of civilizational morale.

It should not be surprising that this crisis of civilizational morale has only become visible since the end of the Cold War. Its effects were first masked by the illusory peace that marked the interwar period; then by the rise of totalitarianism and the Great Depression; then by World War II; and then by the Cold War. It was only after 1991, when the political and military crises that began in 1914 had ended, that the long-term effects of Europe's "rage of self-mutilation" could come to the surface of history and be seen for what they were—and for what they are.

Solzhenitsyn's insight suggests that a theologically informed analysis of history may in fact shed more light on what imagines itself to be the "real world" than most political realists manage to provide. Another Christian analyst of the dynamics of modern European history fills out Solzhenitsyn's indictment and helps us get answers to the "European problem" that cut more deeply than the political or psychological.

Writing during the Occupation of France by Nazi Germany, Henri de Lubac, S.J., proposed that the civilizational crisis in which Europe found itself during World War II was the product of what he called "atheistic humanism"—the deliberate rejection of the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus, in the name of authentic human liberation. What biblical man had perceived as a liberation from the whims of the gods or fate—the self-revelation in history of the one God who was neither a willful tyrant nor a remote abstraction—atheistic humanism perceived as bondage. Human greatness required rejecting the biblical God.

This, de Lubac suggested, was something new. It was not the atheism of skeptical individuals looking to discomfort the neighbors. This was atheistic *humanism*, atheism with a developed ideology and a program for remaking the world. Ideas have consequences, and bad ideas can have lethal consequences. At the heart of the darkness inside the great mid-twentieth-century tyrannies, de Lubac discerned the lethal effects of the marriage between atheistic humanism and modern technology. He summed up the results of this misbegotten union in these terms: "It is not true, as is sometimes said, that man cannot organize the world without God. What is true is that, without God, he can only organize it against man." That is what the tyrannies of the twentieth century had proven—that ultramundane humanism is inevitably inhuman humanism.

I wonder, though, if we cannot push de Lubac's analysis backwards and forwards historically. He makes a powerful case that the mid-twentieth-century tyrannies, communism and Nazism, were expressions of an atheistic humanism that took its cues from the positivism of Comte, the subjectivism of Feuerbach, the materialism of Marx, and the radical willfulness of Nietszche. But hadn't the rot distorted European civilization earlier than Lenin and Hitler? Perhaps the most complete expression of the material effects of atheistic humanism had to wait until Treblinka and Perm Camp 36. But don't we come to a deeper reading of the civilizational trapgate that was 1914-1918 by applying a similar analytic lens? Can we explain why Europe fell into Solzhenitsyn's "rage of self-mutilation" without recognizing, as the great Russian writer put it, that men had "forgotten God"? Doesn't de Lubac's suggestion that that forgetting was in the name of a false concept of human liberation help us understand why the forgetting was so powerful and so complete? If we read "history" from beneath the surface of history, de Lubac's analysis of the drama of atheistic humanism helps flesh out Solzhenitsyn's identification of 1914-1918 as the moment when European civilization went into crisis.

De Lubac's analysis also sheds light on post–Cold War Europe. Here, too, beneath the surface of recent history, we can find residues of the drama of atheistic humanism. Yes, the most grotesque institutional expressions of atheistic humanism were defeated in World War II and the Cold War. But certain intellectual, spiritual, and moral residues remained, again "underneath the surface" of history. Can we explain Europe's enthrallment to what philosopher Charles Taylor has called "exclusive secularism"—a secularism determined to exclude transcendent reference points from cultural, social, and political life—with-

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out taking full account of the drama of atheistic humanism: without, to repeat, taking account of Comte's positivism, Feuerbach's subjectivism, Marx's materialism, and Nietzsche's will-to-power? I doubt it. The depoliticization of Europe lamented by Pierre Manent is not the product of the Brussels bureaucracy alone—and neither are the "presentism" and contempt for tradition decried by Remí Brague.

In other words, the "European problem" is not, simply, a twentieth-century problem—although the crisis of European civilizational morale accelerated exponentially during the Great War when, as Pierre Manent writes, "self-sacrifice gave way to self-mutilation and the frenzied love of death." No, the roots of the "European problem" that thoughtful Europeans and many Americans experience today go back to the nineteenth century, to the drama of atheistic humanism and the related triumph of secularization in Western Europe. For that process of secularization had profound public consequences: it meant the collapse of a transcendent horizon of moral judgment in European public life and the triumph of what Manent calls the "self-adoration" and "fateful hubris" that led to the Great War and its progeny.

As New School University sociologist José Casanova has put it, secularization became "a self-fulfilling prophecy in Europe . . . a taken-for-granted belief shared not only by sociologists but by a majority of the population." Why European Christianity was particularly vulnerable to the siren-song of atheistic humanism raises another, deeper set of questions that are beyond the scope of this article and that deserve extensive and serious study; answers to those questions will certainly require a careful probing of the Catholic Church's identification with those political forces most resistant to the democratic project in late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, as well as a more thorough understanding of what "democracy" meant to those forces that identified the free society with the *laïcisme* that was the precursor of Taylor's "exclusive secularism." Still, even absent definitive answers to those questions, the proximate cultural roots of today's "European problem" can be identified with some clarity.

European man has convinced himself that in order to be modern and free, he must be radically secular. That conviction has had crucial, indeed lethal, consequences for European public life and European culture; indeed, that conviction and its public consequences are at the root of Europe's contemporary crisis of civilizational morale. That crisis of civilizational morale, in turn, helps explain why European man is deliberately forgetting his history. That crisis of civilizational morale helps us understand why European man is abandoning the hard work and high adventure of democratic politics, seeming to prefer the false domestic security of bureaucracy and the false international security of the UN system. That crisis of civilizational morale is why European man is failing to create the human future of Europe.

Writing in the aftermath of World War II, Christopher Dawson took exception to the suggestion that modern European civilization was "pagan." Paganism was rife with religious sentiment, Dawson recalled; what was going on in mid-twentieth-century Europe was something different. True, many men and women had ceased to belong to the Church; but rather than belonging to something else, rather than adhering to another community of transcendent allegiance, they now belonged nowhere. This "spiritual no man's land," as Dawson characterized it, was inherently unstable and ultimately self-destructive. Or, as the usually gentle Dawson put it in an especially fierce passage, "a secular society that has no end beyond its own satisfaction is a monstrosity—a cancerous growth which will ultimately destroy itself." One wonders what Christopher Dawson would say today.

The next question for Americans, however, is—so what? What has any of this to do with us? A lot, I believe. Which means that *their* "European problem" is also ours. Why? Aside from the enormous economic and other practical complications that an exhausted and imploding Europe will cause for the United States, let me suggest three reasons why Americans should care.

The first reason involves *pietas*, an ancient European, which is to say Roman, virtue that teaches us both reverence and gratitude for those on whose shoulders we stand. I am prepared to argue that very little that has crossed the Atlantic in the past several centuries hasn't been improved in the process: from the English language itself to the institutions of constitutional democracy to "rounders" (transformed by Americans into God's game, baseball). By the same token, *pietas* demands that I remember where all those good things came from in their original forms. A United States indifferent to the fate of Europe is a United States indifferent to its roots. Yes, Americans have developed a new form of European civilization. But that American civilization has long understood itself to be in continuity with the civilization of the West that we associate, in its origins, with Europe—with the unique civilizational accomplishment that emerged from the interaction of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome. Americans learned

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about the dignity of the human person, about limited and constitutional government, about the principle of consent, and about the transcendent standards of justice to which the state is accountable in the school of political culture that we call "Europe." We should remember that, with *pietas*. We have seen what historical amnesia about cultural and civilizational roots has done to Europe. Americans ought not want that to happen in America.

The second reason we can and must care has to do with the medium- and long-term threat to American security posed by Europe's demographic meltdown. Demographic vacuums do not remain unfilled—especially when the demographic vacuum in question is a continent possessed of immense economic resources. One can see the effects of Europe's self-inflicted depopulation in the tensions experienced in France, Germany, and elsewhere by rising tides of immigration from North Africa, Turkey, and other parts of the Islamic world. And while, in the most optimistic of scenarios, these immigrants may well become good European democrats, practicing civility and tolerance and committing themselves to the religious freedom of others, there is another and far grimmer alternative. Europe's current demographic trendlines could eventually produce a Europe in which Sobieski's victory at Vienna in 1683 is reversed, such that the Europe of the twenty-second century, or even the late twenty-first, is a Europe increasingly influenced, and perhaps even dominated, by radicalized Islamic populations, convinced that their long-delayed triumph in the European heartland is at hand.

We have already seen what the emergence of significant Islamic populations has done to the politics of France. Is there no connection between the problems posed domestically in France by its new immigrant population, on the one hand, and the strategy of appeasement toward radicalized Islam adopted by French political leaders, on the other? It seems very unlikely. Is a European future dominated by an appeasement mentality toward radical Islam in the best interests of the United States? That seems even more unlikely.

The third reason why the "European problem" is ours as well as theirs has to do with the future of the democratic project, here in the United States and indeed throughout the world. What Pierre Manent laments as Europe's "depoliticization" already has its parallels in our own public life. What is most disturbing, for example, about the bizarre debate over the mere mention of Christianity's contributions to European civilization in the proposed European Constitution is that the amnesiacs who wish to rewrite European history by eliminating Christianity from the historical equation are doing so in service to a thin, indeed anorexic, idea of procedural democracy. To deny that Christianity had anything to do with the evolution of free, law-governed, and prosperous European societies is more than a question of falsifying the past; it is also a matter of creating a future in which moral truth has no role in governance, in the determination of public policy, in understandings of justice, and in the definition of that freedom which democracy is intended to embody.

Were these ideas to triumph in Europe, that would be bad for Europe; but it would also be bad for the United States, for that triumph would inevitably reinforce similar tendencies in our own high culture, and ultimately in our law. The judicial redefinition of freedom as personal willfulness manifest in the 2003 Supreme Court decision *Lawrence v. Texas* was buttressed by citations from European courts. And what would it mean for the democratic project in global terms if the notion that democracy has nothing to do with moral truth is exported from Western Europe to Central and Eastern Europe via the expanding European Union, and thence to other new democracies around the world? If Christopher Dawson was right that a thoroughly secularized democracy, constitutionally and politically disabled from bringing transcendent moral truths to bear on its public life, is self-destructive, then the entire democratic project—in Latin America, in south and east Asia, in Oceania and Canada—is being imperiled by the prospect that the "European problem" will metastasize beyond the current membership of the EU.

So there are many reasons why we should, and must, care. We sever ourselves from our civilizational roots if we ignore Europe in a fit of aggravation or pique. Our security will be further imperiled in a post–September 11 world if Europe's demographics continue to change in ways that give new advantage to the dynamism of radical Islamism in world politics. The American democratic experiment will be weakened if Europe's "depoliticization" reinforces similar tendencies here in the United States, and so will the democratic project in the world.

Is there anything to be done about all this, at the level of public policy? Let me return one last time to Christopher Dawson, who, in an earlier phase of the "European problem," wrote that "the modern dilemma is essentially a spiritual one, and every one of its main aspects, moral, political, and scientific, brings

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us back to the need of a spiritual solution." If Dawson was right, and I think he was, then the long-term answer to the demise of Europe will only be found in a revitalization of Europe's Christian roots and the rebirth of Christian conviction in Christianity's historic heartland. Europe, in other words, needs something like a Great Awakening—by which I mean, not necessarily a fourth wave of the Wesleyan revolution, but a rebirth of life-transforming and culture-forming Christian conviction, especially Catholic conviction. And that, by definition, is something that cannot be produced by public policy—either European domestic policy, or American foreign policy.

U.S. foreign policy can help at the margins by supporting the new democracies of east-central Europe if, as French President Jacques Chirac evidently fears, they continue to show bad manners and resist an EU in which the practice of democracy is attenuated by judicial activism, and the democratic idea is further eroded by institutionalizing the notion of democracy as a matter of political and legal procedures alone.

American public diplomacy could also be far more helpful. The failure of American embassies in Europe over the past two years to systematically engage the European media, European universities and research institutes, and European voluntary organizations—all those places where European opinion is molded—has had serious and damaging results. Most Europeans, including such vigorously pro-American Europeans as the Poles, now have a thoroughly distorted view of American civil society, American domestic politics, American intentions in the world, and American actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am not suggesting that a vigorous public diplomacy would have solved, to our complete satisfaction, that part of the "European problem" that manifested itself at the UN Security Council in late 2002 and early 2003. But it would have created the conditions for the possibility of an internal European debate on the war against terrorism that might have made for a different result in the 2002 German elections, that might have blunted the more egregious behavior of the French government, and that might have created more popular support for the governments of Spain, Italy, and Poland, which did support the U.S. position on Iraq.

Just as the U.S. government must take far more seriously the war of ideas in Europe, so must American philanthropy, which should imagine the present situation as roughly analogous to the contest with Marxist ideas for the soul of Europe in the years immediately following World War II. Generously funded trans-Atlantic initiatives that seek to challenge the hegemony of "exclusive secularism" in European intellectual life and its impact on public policy are as imperative today as initiatives like the Congress for Cultural Freedom and *Encounter* were fifty years ago.

At the end of the day, however, I am less interested in specific policy options—which souls more clever than I can devise—than with understanding the "European problem" at its roots, which are cultural and spiritual rather than political. That is the beginning of wise policy. But it is also the beginning of understanding why "their" European problem is also ours—a cautionary tale that, unless understood in its depth, can and likely will be replayed on this side of the Atlantic, with unhappy consequences for American democracy and for the future of freedom in the world.

These difficult first years of the twenty-first century have taught us the importance of reading world politics in new ways. Europe's crisis of civilizational morale teaches us that, while there are many lenses through which history can be read, theological lenses help us to see deeper, farther, and more truly. FT

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The Enemies of Religious Liberty

James Hitchcock

It is common for religious believers to lament the Supreme Court's barely concealed hostility to the free exercise of religion, at least since the middle decades of the twentieth century. But in the long term, even more damage is likely to be done by the influence of ideas advocated by a cluster of political and legal theorists in the academy. For these writers, religious liberty itself is a pernicious idea.

The term "liberalism" in recent political theory has been defined, by John Rawls and others, as both an agreement to abide by constitutional principles that provide access to all citizens ("political" liberalism) and as a particular ideological concept of a free and open society ("comprehensive" liberalism). According to Rawls, the "political" notion of liberalism takes no position on ultimate questions of meaning—and it is the ideal to which contemporary liberals should aspire.

Oddly enough, this formulation seems to harmonize with the argument of the Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray, according to which belief in religious absolutes can be reconciled with the First Amendment of the Constitution by considering it to be an "article of peace" rather than an "article of faith." In this view, one is not obliged to accept any particular philosophical assumptions but must merely agree to respect the Constitution for the sake of civil harmony. As we shall see, despite Rawls endorsement of this Murrayan ideal, many of the most prominent liberals writing today adopt, whether or not they expicitly say so, a radically comprehensive and even imperial version of liberal ideology.

From the beginning, the American commitment to religious liberty was less than absolute, as the outlawing of Mormon polygamy definitively showed. Religious believers have enjoyed liberty only up to the point where their practices seem to threaten public order. But in the Jehovah's Witness decisions of the 1940s the Supreme Court began significantly to expand the rights of believers, exempting them even from laws considered generally beneficial to society and laying the burden of proof on those who would restrict such liberty.

At the same time that the Court was expanding religious liberty in the 1940s it also began moving away from the assumption, prevalent since the nation's founding, that religion is beneficial to society. After World War II it started invalidating even indirect support that religion receives from government. Justice Felix Frankfurter, fighting a rearguard action against the expansion of religious liberty in the 1940s, demanded that believers relativize their beliefs in order to enjoy the liberty guaranteed by the Constitution, and the Court eventually gave that demand constitutional standing, as citizens who wished to enjoy freedom of worship were told that they must forgo the possibility of bringing their beliefs to bear in the public square.

The First Amendment was thereby brought into tension with itself. Traditionally it had been assumed that "no establishment" was intended to serve as a protection for "free exercise." Now the former provision was understood to place restrictions on religious liberty by excluding religion from public life.

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Another part of Frankfurter's bargain was that believers would not only have to abandon any public role for their faith but would also have to act as though their beliefs themselves were merely relative. As Stephen L. Carter points out in *Dissent of the Governed* (1998), by minimizing the role of religion in the public sphere, modern liberalism also renders it more difficult to live religiously in private. If the First Amendment is considered an "article of faith," society must of necessity discourage belief in ultimate truths, because such beliefs are said to foster division.

It is religion's claim to articulate the meaning of existence that runs up against Rawlsian "comprehensive" liberalism. As Carter observes, deep faith is both incomprehensible and threatening to the liberal order, which therefore defines religion as irrational, private, and divisive. As J. Judd Owen has pointed out in *Religion and the Demise of Liberal Rationalism* (2001), the liberal concept of individual freedom tends to create an atmosphere in which religion is tolerated only to the degree that it is deemed harmless: tolerance ends at the point where religion makes strong demands on its adherents.

The strict separationist argument has therefore been extended to what is "private" as well as public. Thus Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson acknowledge in *Democracy and Disagreement* (1996) that the liberal order threatens religious belief—and they believe it should. Similarly, in *Toleration and the Constitution* (1986) David A. J. Richards asserts the necessity of fostering "a religion and an ethics that validate the highest-order moral powers of rationality and reasonableness of a free people," which he declares to be "the only kind of religion suitable for a democracy." Richard Rorty likewise proclaims in *Truth and Progress* (1991) that the "highest achievements of humanity" are incompatible with traditional religion.

Ostensibly the primary political argument against strong religious beliefs is that they threaten civic peace; for this reason, Cass Sunstein argues in *The Partial Constitution* (1999) that America's founding document decrees "a secular liberal democracy in a way that is intended to minimize religious tension." He thus urges the liberal state to force the intolerant to be tolerant, with government serving as "a divine instrument" for depriving groups of "weapons to use against one another."

But if no deep conflicts are permissible in the liberal state, coercive methods may be necessary to restrain them. As Stanley Fish, no friend of religion, admits, the liberal state is tolerant in inverse proportion to the seriousness of what is at stake and does not achieve its promised neutrality. At the same time, in *There's No Such Thing As Free Speech* (1994) he ridicules believers for invoking liberal principles on their own behalf, arguing that they should not expect to benefit from liberalism's promises but ought actually to reject them. Wojciech Sadurski similarly argues in *Moral Pluralism* (1990) that government cannot be neutral towards those who allegedly deny the principle of neutrality itself.

According to Kathleen M. Sullivan of the Stanford University Law School, the "establishment clause" actually establishes a culture from which there can be no legitimate dissent—in which religion is tolerated only "insofar as it is consistent with the establishment of the secular moral order." She candidly admits that "the religion clauses enable the government to endorse a culture of liberal democracy that will predictably clash over many issues with religious subcultures." But believers "must pay for the secular army which engineers the truce among them" for the sake of civil peace. Critics of the theory of evolution, for example, are accused by Sullivan of being in violation of the spirit of the Constitution, which, she claims, has been "shaped by an argument honoring Galileo's defense of empirical rationality against the abuses of Bible interpretation." Hence the state is obligated to encourage "scientific rationality."

It follows logically that churches should be denied the right to be fully self-governing. Thus in *A Wall of Separation* (1998) Ted Jelen accuses a Catholic bishop who threatens religious sanctions against dissident church members of being guilty of "a religiously based threat to the prerogatives of democratic citizenship." The same charge would be brought against religious officials who express or enforce opposition to homosexual marriages or abortion. Sullivan thinks that churches can be allowed to exclude women from the ranks of the clergy only so long as this does not "impede the functioning of the civil public order." In *Please Don't Wish Me a Merry Christmas* (1997), Steven Feldman goes so far as to argue against allowing the major Christian denominations to proselytize among non-Christians.

The liberal state, Sadurski argues, should discriminate among religious groups on the basis of how "progressive" each is thought to be, and Rogers Smith insists in *Liberalism and American Constitutional Law* (1990) that religion can only enjoy constitutional liberties if it undergoes a basic transformation to make itself more "rational" or "self-critical." Going further, Steven Macedo, who explicitly identifies his view as "comprehensive," defines liberalism in *The New Right Versus the Constitution* (1987) as "a permanently educative order" for the preservation of liberal values and argues that the power of government can be legiti-

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mately used against illiberal churches because doing so promotes greater overall freedom. He urges "the right sort of liberal partisanship in all spheres of life," and, despite the Constitution's explicit prohibition of any religious test for public office, he argues that certain religious believers (notably Catholics) can justly be excluded from certain public functions, such as serving as judges.

Feminism is inevitably a pillar of this new academic liberal orthodoxy, and Macedo insists that religious groups should not be allowed to "inject" their own views of gender roles into public discussions. Calling her position "extremely moderate," Mary E. Becker of the DePaul College of Law rejects the very concept of religious liberty as "patriarchal," since it allegedly means something different for women than for men.

But legal restraint on religious influence is not to be confined only to the public sphere and to corporate religious life; it extends to individuals as well. Macedo acknowledges that such strictures are designed to affect citizens' private beliefs; exclusion from public life, he predicts, will cause believers to find their faiths less credible, and he justifies tolerating these faiths merely on the grounds that such toleration can create an environment in which it might be possible to wean people away from their beliefs.

Along the same lines, Smith asserts that "society" may overide people's commitments to particular religious groups if these commitments "seriously restrain their members' capacities and opportunities for reflective, independent choice." In other words, some private organizations, such as churches, should be restricted because their beliefs can be a danger to liberal values. Gutmann and Thompson define children as future citizens whose educations are too important to be left entirely to parents, and claim that it is primarily through the educational system that the barrier between "public" and "private" is broken down and personal religious beliefs are claimed as legitimate concerns of the state. Gutmann and Thompson explicitly hold that the state need not be concerned that its educational system might violate the rights of religious believers.

Such views were once anathema to the Supreme Court. In the *Pierce* decision of 1925, the Court recognized the rights of private schools and parents, and thereby significantly affirmed religious liberty, especially in Justice James C. McReynolds' assertion that "the child is not the creature of the state." The 1970 *Yoder* case, in which the Court upheld the right of Amish parents not to enroll their children in public high schools, also focused on these issues. In dissenting in the latter case, Justice William O. Douglas got to the heart of the matter in asking whether parents had the right to "impose" their beliefs on their children, or whether on the contrary the state might not have an obligation to expose children to the opportunities of "the new and amazing world of diversity which we have today." (Douglas believed that 90 percent of people were not even fit to be parents.) Logically this left it at best an open question whether parents possess the right to raise their children in a particular religion.

If the academic advocates of comprehensive liberalism get their way, Douglas' extreme, formerly dissenting views would become the norm. Consider one of the most sensitive areas of cultural conflict today: sexual morality. Relying on arguments advanced in the writings of the "comprehensive" liberals examined here, a program promoting sexual abstinence could be challenged as unconstitutional, on the grounds that it arises from theistic beliefs, while a program encouraging sexual experimentation could be justified on the grounds that it is not religious in nature. In such conflicts religious believers are always slated to lose, which Stanley Fish, for one, insists is entirely appropriate.

Comprehensive liberalism implies that the *Pierce* decision was fundamentally in error and that there is no right to religious education at all, especially in conjunction with the conservative beliefs of parents. In the most extreme version of this argument, articulated by James Dwyer in *Religious Schools vs. Children's Rights* (1998), religious education inculcates "reactionary and repressive" values in children, and, for the good of the child, the state is not only obligated to prohibit such schools completely or monitor them closely but also to monitor closely how parents educate their children at home.

The issue raised by Douglas in his *Yoder* dissent was ostensibly the rights of children, a formulation which ignores the fact that in practice children require authority and that the only alternative to parental authority is the authority of the state. Dwyer asserts, almost casually, that parental choice in education might be "inconsistent with the state's aims," a formulation in which parental rights are subordinated to the whims of teachers and in which advocacy on behalf of "children" blends imperceptibly into advancing the aims of the state.

This concept of "children's rights" implies an official orthodoxy, with public agencies determining that certain beliefs are true and others false—and enforcing that distinction in the name of freedom. Becker and Dwyer, for example, demand that all education inculcate feminism and permissive attitudes towards

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sexual behavior, and that religions which fail to do so be made subject to state regulation.

For some liberals, "free exercise" has therefore come to be seen as dangerous, as it may have the effect of strengthening a cultural phenomenon that they consider unhealthy, even when it is promoted only privately; they would thus abolish religious freedom entirely. Richards thus advocates freedom not for religious beliefs but for "rational and reasonable capacities of persons themselves to originate, exercise, express, and change theories of life and how to live it well."

Dwyer insists that the government does not violate the "establishment clause" so long as its actions are intended to inhibit religion rather than to favor it, and Sullivan acknowledges that religion must be treated "asymmetrically" from other freedoms, with "entanglement" between government and religion a good thing for the purpose of restraining religion. Macedo urges the liberal society to admit frankly its uncompromisable hostility to certain kinds of dogmatic religion, while Martha Nussbaum of the University of Chicago postulates that religious liberty sometimes undermines other freedoms and thus should always be subordinated to those freedoms (for example, there can be no right to speak against the use of contraceptives).

But a test of liberalism's commitment to liberty should be precisely whether it can tolerate the "intolerant"—that is, those who make absolute claims for their beliefs. This in turn is part of liberalism's larger test—whether it can function nonideologically, providing maximum freedom for contending viewpoints, or whether it is itself a comprehensive ideology that demands adherence. As William Galston argues in *Liberal Purposes* (1991), liberalism rightly understood ought to tolerate even the "unexamined life."

If the Constitution respects not religion as such but merely "conscience," then it follows that the state's endorsement of certain controversial secular positions is no different from its endorsement of religious beliefs. The implications of this view are evaded by treating the First Amendment as embodying two contradictory meanings, which thereby gives nontheistic ideologies a competitive advantage. As Jesse Choper has pointed out in *Securing Religious Liberty* (1995), the "establishment clause" has no secular equivalent—no promise not to establish a secular code of belief.

In identifying the interests of the state, in formulating some concept of the public good, comprehensive liberals exclude religious believers as such from citizenship, even though a very high proportion of citizens define themselves as religious. A large majority of the nation is thus required to acquiesce in the use of governmental authority precisely for the purpose of undermining their own beliefs, even of impairing their ability to inculcate those beliefs in their children. By redefining "free exercise" and exalting the "establishment clause," separationists have in effect "established" their own hostility to religion.

Extreme separationists justify restraints on religious liberty on the grounds that religion tends to foment divisiveness. But they impose no such restraints on divisiveness of a secular kind. Ironically, liberals who are quick to detect signs of political repression even in democratic societies now justify the restriction of religious liberty on precisely the grounds traditionally used to justify political repression—that full freedom cannot be granted to those who allegedly would use it to undermine the regime of freedom. It is, to say the least, paradoxical to restrict religion undemocratically because it is deemed to be insufficiently supportive of democracy. FT

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Alone in the Academy

Eric Miller

I was starting the second year of a Ph.D. program in U.S. history at the University of Delaware when the professor who would direct my dissertation, Guy Alchon, dropped a remarkable book into my mailbox: Christopher Shannon's *Conspicuous Criticism: Tradition, the Individual, and Culture in American Social Thought, from Veblen to Mills* (1996). The book gave me a glimpse of what it might mean for a historian to do "Christian scholarship," and it inspired a concern about the modern world that in the years since I've not been able to brush aside.

Guy called it a "dark" book, and he thought it would resonate with me. (I'm almost sure he meant that favorably.) I had already taken his seminar on "The Political Economy of American Intellectuals," and had written a paper for it on the American social critic and historian Christopher Lasch. With considerable help from Shannon's work, I ended up expanding that paper into a biographical study of Lasch's life and thought as part of my dissertation.

Shannon had been a student of Lasch's at the University of Rochester and had remained close to him until Lasch's death from cancer in 1994; in the midst of his illness Lasch had even read and commented on Shannon's manuscript. Such closeness, however, did not stop Shannon from offering a few pages of vigorous criticism of his former teacher. After spending 180 pages of *Conspicuous Criticism* dissecting modernity's secular and rationalist frame of mind, Shannon turned to Lasch to underscore his overarching point: Americans, he contended, were trapped in a political and cultural straitjacket due to their complicity in modernity's "critical project of uprooting all received traditions."

Shannon tagged this project "the tradition of conspicuous criticism," and attempted to locate Lasch within it. "More than any other intellectual since the 1950s," Shannon wrote, "Lasch carried on the struggle with modernity as it took shape in the tradition of conspicuous criticism." But despite his acuity of vision, Lasch seemed unable to accept one ominous historical reality: due to the modern rejection of a world governed by a "spiritual order" and the affirmation instead of "the creation of value and meaning by autonomous human subjects," the sort of community for which Lasch and so many others yearned—whether they were on the left, center, or right—was impossible. Whatever their own self-flattering perceptions, Americans were, constitutionally, "a people bound together only by a belief in their inalienable right not to be bound together to anything." Given this brute philosophical and political reality, the unceasing jeremiads pronounced by moralists like Lasch, however intelligent and well-intentioned, were doomed to fail. "Calls for moral responsibility are pointless apart from some context of shared values, and the only values Americans share are the procedural norms of a libertarian social order, the thinness of which incites the anxiety that drives the jeremiad in the first place." He concluded the book with a damning pronouncement: "The bourgeois attempt to construct a rational alternative to tradition has failed."

In his opening pages Shannon had disclosed that he was a Catholic, and his cool, gutsy diagnosis of what he termed "the Reformation-Enlightenment attack on tradition" revealed the remarkable extent to which he was willing to place his faith in the foreground even when writing as a young, vulnerable scholar. I

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later learned from a mutual friend the cost of Shannon's theological affirmations: he had been unable to land a tenure-track teaching job, his Yale Ph.D. and enviable publishing record notwithstanding. My friend's sense was that Shannon's Catholicism had helped to do him in.

It was Shannon's position as a Christian writing within the academy that helped to account for my own grateful and enthusiastic reception of his arguments. I suspected, as I made my way through his book, that Shannon felt as uncomfortable in the modern American university as I did, and his book seemed at least in part an effort to probe the roots of his unease and to explain his findings to his (uncomprehending) peers and colleagues. What provoked Shannon (and me) wasn't simply a wrongheaded "worldview," or some other species of philosophical abstraction in the university. Rather, it was a way of life—the actual living out by real people of this "rational alternative to tradition." By the century's end this way of life was standard within the American university, where both Shannon and I, as fledgling Christian scholars, found ourselves uneasily living and moving and having our being.

One obvious feature of this university-sanctioned-and-sustained way of life is its depleted understanding of marriage and sexuality, and its accompanying commitment to oppose any who would speak against this understanding. Although this received wisdom is conveyed in the language of liberation, I discovered that it provided cover for lives that were often full of hopelessness. One of my classmates was about to be married, and I remember hearing another student wisecrack to him about the divorce that was sure to follow—a barren, ugly cynicism, rooted, sadly, in an all-too-intimate knowledge of the empirical evidence.

It's no wonder that in this atmosphere so many of my peers turned to the study of history for hope. Here again, though (and consistent with Shannon's thesis), most of their research endeavors had to do with some attempt to discover who was oppressing whom, and what sorts of liberation the oppressed were being denied, whether the oppression was due to law, custom, or belief. Fair enough—it is important to gain a full historical understanding of the varieties of oppression. But did these folks really think that the larger, well-traveled narrative about "oppression" and "freedom" captured the whole story? Was there nothing else in history to wonder about besides a ritualistically rehashed liberation tale?

Among the saddest conclusions I came to during graduate school was that the answer is no. For most of my peers, I realized, there was no other story. The other possibilities—philosophical, ideological, theological—had been ruled out, debunked and filed under the category of "oppressor."

Lasch had offered a keen description of the nature of this newly emerging self early on. His improbable best-seller of 1979, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, both summed up and deepened a conviction shared by many that Americans were changing, becoming less able and willing to practice citizenship, exchanging the common life for, as he put it, "purely personal preoccupations." Lasch tied this historical shift in character to the ongoing advance of liberal capitalism, with its ever-colonizing market and ever-expanding state. "The atrophy of older traditions of self-help has eroded everyday competence, in one area after another, and has made the individual dependent on the state, the corporation, and other bureaucracies," he said. "Narcissism represents the psychological dimension of this dependence."

It was a powerful argument. It was also precisely the type of argument—a jeremiad—that Shannon, two decades later, called at once understandable, monotonous, and futile. For Shannon, the ending of the American story was already scripted, and even a collective turning away from corporate capitalism wouldn't remove the fact that America's deepest (and sole) point of unity was the individual, and the individual alone—a laughably weak foundation upon which to construct anything like a "commonwealth," "republic," or even a "community."

Shannon's pessimism about the possibility of truly improving our common life resonated with my own experience in the university: whether we were Catholic, Protestant, or irreligious, our common circumstance as academics by the 1990s seemed to be a post-communal one. Creatures of our age, we were starving for a fullness, a socially embodied richness, that prevailing civilizational patterns and our own moral commitments (both chosen and inherited) precluded us from achieving. The paeans to "freedom" rang out with regularity, but within me (and, I gathered, within many others in varying degrees and ways) they effected mainly a mild sense of desolation. Everyone seemed to be trying a little too hard to celebrate liberalism's lonely triumph.

A sure sign of our loneliness was the near-total absence of any genuine political discussion or debate within the university, whether in graduate seminars, public lectures, or less formal settings. All graduate students "knew," to take the most obvious and telling example, that "conservatism" (rarely defined or actually discussed) was pathological and thus hideous and dangerous; this assumption ended up setting the

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ground rules for any consideration of conservatism as either a historical subject or a contemporary point of view that might fruitfully be brought to bear on our discussions of authors, politics, or life.

My gut sense was that the culture of the university didn't have the strength to accommodate any serious challenge to the dominant liberal standpoint. In this regard, Jean Bethke Elshtain's recent remark about the kind of self that has accompanied "the triumph of the therapeutic culture" is apt; it is, she says, a "quivering sentimental self that gets uncomfortable very quickly, because this self has to feel good about itself all the time. Such selves do not make good arguments, they validate one another." The university in the nineties seemed a case study of this self's triumph: genuine, principled argument rarely even made an appearance there. We academics had by then become a people fighting mainly *for ourselves*—a posture that tends to foster, with some rapidity, a defensive, emotional state of mind, not one centered on open-mindedness, rationality, and all of the other attributes that intellectuals are supposed to possess.

Elshtain's perspective on this peculiarly disabled modern self resembles and is in fact indebted to Lasch's; indeed, she and Lasch were close companions in the last decade or so of his life. But Lasch, writing in the 1970s from within a self-consciously rationalist framework, could at that point only employ explanations rooted in social and economic causes for what he knew to be true about us; absent was the metaphysical, philosophical dimension that would enrich his work in the eighties and nineties. (See for instance his *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* [1984] and *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* [1991].) Behind this shift in his thinking lay the remarkable work of an author whom Lasch read with enthusiasm in the early eighties: Alasdair MacIntyre, perhaps the dominant moral philosopher of the last third of the twentieth century.

MacIntyre had moved from Marxism to Thomism by the 1981 publication of *After Virtue*, a book in which he presented an interpretation of the modern self that both echoed and deepened Lasch's (and others') depiction of our enlarging cultural narcissism. On MacIntyre's view, having gradually abandoned the long-dominant Aristotelian tradition of virtue ethics, modern moral thinking had devolved into emotivism, which assumes as a matter of course that "all moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character" "We live in a specifically emotivist culture," contended MacIntyre, a culture that locates moral order not in a benevolent, overarching telos but solely within the individual self.

Like Lasch, MacIntyre looked at the twentieth century and saw chaos; the old moral consensus of Europe and North America had dissolved. "Each moral agent now spoke unconstrained by the externalities of divine law, natural teleology, or hierarchical authority; but why should anyone else now listen to him?" he sensibly asked. Also like Lasch, he made it clear that he was not simply another former member of the left who had made a home on the right: capitalism was deeply implicated in the destructive historical turn that concerned him. The tradition for which and within which he was arguing, he emphasized, "is at variance with central features of the modern economic order and more especially its individualism, its acquisitiveness, and its elevation of the values of the market to a central social place." Reaganites reading him in the eighties could find only limited solace in his critique of the secular modern order.

It was MacIntyre's discussion of the modern self—and how it had replaced an earlier, nobler form—that had the deepest effect on my thinking. Lasch and Shannon had helped me to see more starkly the plight of the individual in modern capitalist civilization, but neither had provided much by way of normative guidance. Here MacIntyre spoke powerfully. From the perspective of the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition, we moderns had "suffered a deprivation, a stripping away of qualities that were once believed to belong to the self." The typically modern self possessed "a certain abstract and ghostly character," disconnected as it was from that which could define it: "In many premodern, traditional societies it is through his or her membership in a variety of social groups that the individual identifies himself or herself and is identified by others. I am brother, cousin, and grandson, member of this household, that village, this tribe." For MacIntyre, there was no escaping this elemental identity. "I am born with a past; and to try to cut myself off from that past, in the individualist mode, is to deform my present relationships. . . . These are not characteristics that belong to human beings accidentally, to be stripped away in order to discover 'the real me'"; in reality, there was no such thing as the isolated, autonomous, independent "individual." In fact, he described the "individual" as "that newly invented social institution."

This vision of human obligation, identity, and community clearly had no place in the contemporary university. If, as essayist and scientist Wes Jackson has quipped, the university today offers one single major—upward mobility—then its central function,

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platitudes aside, is to provide functionaries for that mighty tandem, the corporate economy and the secular state. Today's graduates emerge from the modern university (and the whole American educational system) in no philosophical or moral condition to embrace a self-identity centered on service to kin or place. The university trains us to serve other masters.

MacIntyre's understanding of the self cast long-awaited light on all sorts of perplexities, from the failures of "conservatism" and "radicalism" alike to my struggle to reconcile my own university-sponsored "upward mobility" with my rural, working-class roots. I could now see more clearly than ever that the sort of peace for which I yearned, a peace joining the social and personal, must include a deep fidelity to kin, to place, and, finally, to my own divinely shaped design—all of the things, in short, that modern wisdom had told me I could (and should) cast off. The futility of such a way of life had become apparent: to abandon an identity rooted in kinship, telos, and place would be to abandon myself.

After Virtue was an audacious book, a heady attempt to implode, from the very center of the university itself, the mythological narrative of the West's progressive march through history. That entire academic disciplines took MacIntyre seriously is vivid testament to the intellectual power and rhetorical verve with which he made his case. But if the book was quietly feisty, it was also defensive in tone. This defensiveness was understandable, given MacIntyre's embattled stance, yet it inevitably diminished the power of his argument.

Most damaging, perhaps, was the simple fact that MacIntyre made little effort in his narrative to explain how the tradition he honored had contributed to the eventual triumph of the individualistic culture he damned. Arguably, the entire modern project, at least in its political manifestation, began as a corrective to defects in traditional Western cultural and political structures. If this is so, then those Christians who for centuries opposed political liberalization ended up, tragically, siding with those who would illegitimately exclude the poor, women, or minority races and ethnic groups from political liberty. The philosophical tightness of MacIntyre's overarching argument against modernity did nothing to erase the actual historical failures of his forebears, who in some ways invited the great modern political, intellectual, and religious revolts. Given these failures, a greater measure of sympathy and pathos in MacIntyre's narrative might have made it more compelling.

This criticism does not diminish the immensity of his achievement, however. After MacIntyre and the many he has influenced, including Lasch, Shannon, and Elshtain, "modernity" looks less like progress and more like an experiment gone bad, a cultural corrective that has devoured the culture itself. "Liberating" the individual is the only end our civilization collectively knows; we barely perceive that other understandings of common life have existed, and continue to exist, even in our own multicultural midst. Today, insofar as we as a nation are one it is due to marketing, technology-spawned fantasies, and, paradoxically, the individualist creed itself. And insofar as we are "individuals," we become so by ritualistically cutting ourselves off from our native communities and giving ourselves over to a putative freedom that exploits our aimlessness, our appetites, and our hopelessness in the ongoing creation of a "global" society. Could this truly be a satisfactory solution to the ancient question of how to hold in balance the one and the many?

George Packer's beautifully crafted memoir, *The Blood of the Liberals* (2000), provides a poignant personal rendering of this development. The grandson of a self-proclaimed Jeffersonian Congressman from Alabama and the son of a self-consciously liberal law professor (and a Stanford University provost during the late 1960s), Packer tells, with disarming frankness, a three-generational story about what has happened to a country that seems unable to bind itself together in ways that honor its venerable, organizing ideals of citizenship. Repelled by the tendency of twentieth-century liberals like his father to cut themselves off from their own "blood" to serve the mind (he notes, for instance that his father gave the university "all his energy, much more than he gave his family, because he believed in the high importance of the life of the mind"), Packer narrates his own journey through his family's past, subtly intertwining his personal narrative with a broader argument about the direction of American history itself. His conclusion? "The main problem of our time is a loss of belief in collective self-betterment." The revolts of the sixties, he contends, may have changed a lot of lives but they "didn't leave behind a viable worldview," making what he calls the post-sixties "ruins of liberalism" at once understandable and pathetic. "This was the face of American prosperity at the end of the twentieth century," he writes, "racially tolerant, environmentally conscious, and determined to wall itself off from the low-paid countrymen who cut its grass and wait on its tables and look after its children."

Packer is a leftist longing for a community that he can't find. In his mid-thirties he goes so far as to investigate his aunt's evangelical world, and even travels from his home in Boston to Washington D.C. to

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attend the massive 1997 Promise Keepers rally, in search of one single experience of social, interracial solidarity. Understanding "religion" to be a "challenge" to his "liberalism," he nonetheless senses that evangelicals have what he has been unable to locate on the left, "something that can't be summoned on demand: vitality." At the end of his evangelical explorations, he sadly concludes that "all the years of rational training at home had killed the nerves that might have been receptive to religious stimuli."

Packer was looking in the right direction—*cultus*—even if his own search ended in disappointment. The communities that will be forged in our midst will surely be religious in a self-conscious way, for actual religions—our collective responses to the mystery that lies beyond and within our seeing and touching—are what have historically made possible the sorts of communities that we in our time so struggle to achieve. Communities need God as children need parents: apart from the ordering presence of a religion, we fly apart and die alone.

MacIntyre closed *After Virtue* in cryptic fashion by commending to us as our hope not merely a "religion" but the monastery itself—a place where Christians do live and die together. "We are," he concluded, "waiting not for a Godot, but for another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict."

Seen from this point of view, Christian colleges with "mission statements"—such as the college at which I teach—seem driven at least partly by countercultural, communal visions like MacIntyre's: we profess Christian doctrine and practice as our defining feature and our primary driving force. But a stroll through the campus bookstore, or a visit by an accrediting agency, even the phrase "mission statement" itself—all these remind me of the extent to which we at Christian colleges, despite our clear differences of belief and behavior with our secular equivalents, swim in the same polluted waters. I often wonder whether it is even possible to take higher education in a distinctively Christian direction in this globalizing, homogenizing age—or if our own halfway covenant with modernity is not, in the end, a devil's bargain.

I confess these doubts while working within the bounds of a community that wrestles actively (I wish more actively) with these questions. Hence the irony of my own quest. My deepening discovery of the human need for a life more richly communal has mainly occurred while studying and working within one of the places most responsible for the dissolution of traditional understandings of common life: the modern university—even, all too often, in its "Christian" guises.

But perhaps there is a logic beneath the irony. Before there were places like Delaware, there were places like Harvard and Princeton and Yale. And before there were places like Harvard and Princeton and Yale, there were places like Oxford and Paris and Wittenberg. Perhaps if true communities are to be born in our postmodern age, they will yet begin within the walls of communities like those of long ago, communities that set themselves apart in order to dedicate themselves to discovering who we are, where we are, and how we ought to comport ourselves as we walk with our Creator on this earth. This sort of collegial renewal, Benedictine in scope and end, deserves all of the effort we have to give. FT

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Books in Review

Accomplishment—or Fame?

Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950. By Charles Murray. *Harper Collins. 668 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by Philip Jenkins

Charles Murray has an admirable penchant for tackling very ambitious topics, and, in the process, raising challenging questions. Those qualities are evident even in a book as comprehensively wrong-headed as *Human Accomplishment:. The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950.*

The book has several major goals. First, Murray seeks to identify the key innovations and accomplishments in human history, ranging widely over the arts, literature, and the sciences. In addition to specific discoveries and cultural breakthroughs, he also notes fourteen key "meta inventions," a curious grab bag that includes artistic realism, polyphony, the novel, Arabic numerals, and the scientific method. He then identifies the key individuals associated with these giant accomplishments. Based on this master list of some four thousand people—overwhelmingly men—he tries to account for the patterns and distributions he finds. His book is thus an exercise in historiometry, a word with a good Victorian pedigree, and a concept that he suggests is ripe for revival.

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Murray's overall thesis strongly favors a socially and politically conservative interpretation, implying that the traditional West has led the "human pursuit of excellence," and that Christianity has played a critical role in that process. Christianity, especially in its Protestant form, stimulates notions such as vocation and duty, encourages purposeful activity, and fosters a belief in autonomous efficacy. A striking table compares different societies by these criteria, with Reformation Protestantism and Renaissance Catholicism leading the pack, with "East Asia, India, and the Arab world" lagging far behind, and "post-Freud secularism" not making a much better showing. In short, "Christianity is an important variable, one of the most important in the story of modern accomplishment. I am not arguing that it explains everything—just as, for that matter, purpose and autonomy do not explain everything. But they do explain a lot."

Conversely, a world that scorns Western and Christian values loses cultural and scientific momentum, and Murray warns that the rate of achievement and accomplishment has been declining in recent years, especially in literature and the arts. The book has obvious relevance to current debates over the "clash of civilizations," not least in its suggestion that some civilizations are simply much more productive and creative than others. Equally powerful are the implications for education, in reasserting the centrality of Western Civilization and its religious core. It is almost a manifesto for a Great Books curriculum.

Any or all of these arguments may be correct, and intuitively one might agree with most of Murray's positions. Those notorious Dead White European Males (80 percent of Murray's sample) usually deserved the awe they inspired, while no reasonable observer can dispute the total intellectual hegemony of the Judeo-Christian West over the past few centuries. The problem comes when Murray tries to ground his views in a social-scientific approach, and indeed, one that is presented so confidently that unwitting readers might be tempted to accept it as authoritative. No matter how detailed the scientific methods, the regression analyses, and Lotka curves, a study can only be as good as the data on which it relies, and most historians and sociologists will (or should) have serious qualms about Murray's basic approach.

The book's greatest weakness is the selection of the historical accomplishers, the millennial movers and shakers. Murray finds these names through an impressive array of standard works of reference, drawn from several nations and languages, and from a broad span of time. Names are further measured by a basket of "measures of eminence," including the length of discussion they receive in the relevant literature. According to Murray, these methods give a firm quantitative basis to assertions that Shakespeare, Darwin, and Einstein are not just eminent figures, but excellent ones, leaders of human accomplishment. Such quantification gives the impression that a social-scientific process is under way, as it may well be, though just what is being measured is open to serious debate. Murray believes that his tables measure the historical significance of individuals, their excellence; but a fundamental doctrine in social science is that a theory can

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scarcely be regarded as credible if one can find a completely different explanation that accounts at least as well for the observed data. Doing science is about testing and eliminating rival hypotheses.

Let me now offer such a rival explanation for the numbers that are offered in the pages of *Human Accomplishment*. I will suggest that what Murray has found is largely a function of modern research and publishing. At least since the Enlightenment, Europe and the Europeanized world have massively dominated the global production of knowledge, and also the manufacture and sale of books. Encyclopedias and biographical dictionaries have been produced in vast numbers, and overwhelmingly these works reflect the social and political assumptions of their authors, editors, and consumers, and the state of Western historical knowledge. That, in turn, reflects the state of the society's academic institutions, and the historical profession that operates from those schools and colleges. Since the West leads dramatically in all those fields, its readers, writers, and researchers shape the past as it is constructed in contemporary works of reference.

Even when checked by good faith efforts to maintain a global perspective, lists drawn from these works will inevitably have a Western bias. If the academic profession of, say, China is less well developed than that of Europe or North America, obviously we will know less about Chinese innovators through the centuries—and that is doubly true if Chinese society is less impressed by the notion of individual genius. Western dictionaries and encyclopedias associate great movements with specific individuals rather than broader trends and demonstrate a Romantic fascination with the inventor or artist as Promethean genius. In more mundane terms, readers like to associate ideas with names and, ideally, faces.

If these statements are true, then we would expect any survey based on contemporary reference books to find that certain individuals receive massive attention as the key figures in the arts and sciences, and that this select band of culture heroes will be heavily dominated by Westerners. Badly neglected would be the innovators of China, India, and *Dar al-Islam*, not to mention those of civilizations that for one reason or another were snuffed out—for example, the pre-Columbian Americas. In other words, we would find exactly the same results that Murray presents, but arising from reasons utterly different from those he suggests. This would be a roster not of the great accomplishers but of those who are currently *thought of* as enjoying that exalted status, and that is a very different matter.

From this alternative perspective, what Murray has written is not a survey of "human accomplishments," but rather a reputational study of those individuals who currently enjoy the highest prestige in the contemporary West. That is in some ways a valuable endeavor, but it cannot possibly serve as the basis for the conclusions he seeks to draw. It is a sociology of knowledge as presented in reference books. The book is thus about fame, not accomplishment; and this despite Murray's remark that, "if fame were at the core of what I really meant, the exercise would not be worth my time to conduct nor yours to read."

The difference between achievement and reputation can be neatly illustrated from Murray's earliest examples, the pre-Socratic thinkers Thales, Democritus, and Pythagoras. Inclusion of these familiar figures seems to give Murray's survey a respectably ancient and comfort-

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ably Western starting point. But the true starting point may be rather more ancient and may lie rather further east. When modern reference books describe the intellectual innovations of the pre-Socratics, they are following a tradition of venerable antiquity, but not one that is necessarily accurate. Perhaps these thinkers were indeed prophets of modern science and philosophy; or perhaps, as some modern historians believe, they only popularized in the West insights that originated in ancient Mesopotamia and were then disseminated through the Assyrian *oikoumene* of the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., until they reached the distant shores of the Aegean. When composing a modern reference book, though, it is massively easier to explain that a given idea originated with Thales or Anaximander than to provide this unattractively complex intellectual genealogy.

I HAVE SUGGESTED that Murray's list of great innovators is too flawed to be usable; but for the sake of argument, let us suppose that it is accurate and worthwhile. Assuming that he is in fact presenting the trajectory of human progress, which is above all a Western phenomenon, how accurate are his explanations of the process? As we have seen, he stresses Christianity as "an important variable" in human progress and creativity, and he even relates the abundance of Jewish innovation from the nineteenth century onwards to contact with the Christian world. To his credit, Murray also explores a number of alternative hypotheses, including population, war and peace, stability and prosperity, and political freedom. In short, he tries to apply the critical scientific test of excluding alternative hypotheses, but he is surely missing some of the key elements, especially in explaining scientific and technological change.

Take, for instance, the enormous concentration of such innovators in the European world, and especially within the Anglo-American tradition. Or consider how innovation was then applied to general use through the activity of entrepreneurs and business corporations, and in turn served as a platform for later development and accomplishment. Many historians would attribute this success to three closely related factors—namely, security of property, inheritance customs (mainly primogeniture), and the rule of law. All were essential for commercial and economic growth. To varying degrees, European societies discovered and applied this mixture in a way that their non-European counterparts did not, and often still have not done. Innovation could be cultivated because it was profitable. Profit could then be accumulated and passed on to descendants, who could build the capital necessary for the production of more knowledge—or, where appropriate, for the patronage of great works of painting and sculpture, or the building of colleges. And profits were defended by courts, so they were not (generally) subject to the larcenous whims of the local sheikh or rajah. Taken together, these factors go a long way towards explaining global Western supremacy. Henry Bracton and Sir William Blackstone contributed at least as much to the "Triumph of the West" as did religious thinkers such as Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin.

One of the greatest challenges in comparative historical writing is accounting for the preeminence of the West, and Murray's book makes a valiant contribution to addressing this issue. But he proves less than he claims.

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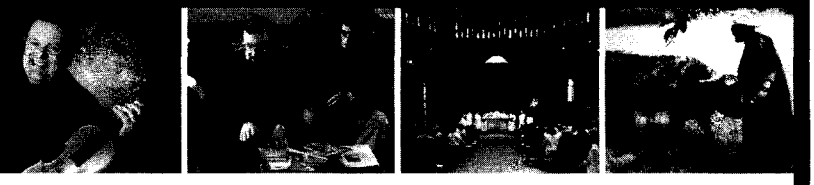

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Founding Fathers?

JOHN WINTHROP: AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN FOUNDING FATHER. By FRANCIS J. BREMER. *Oxford University Press. 478 pp. $39.95.*

WILLIAM BRADFORD'S BOOKS: *OF PLIMMOTH PLANTATION* AND THE PRINTED WORD. By DOUGLAS ANDERSON. *Johns Hopkins University Press. 280 pp. $45.*

Reviewed by Mark Noll

JOHN WINTHROP was forty-two years old when in 1630 he joined the Puritans who left England in order to create a godly commonwealth in the new world. Behind him lay a modest life of gentlemanly accomplishment in the Suffolk countryside. Ahead lay the wilderness, but also the vision of an entire social order organized for fellowship with God and with God's people. For most of the remaining nineteen years of his life, Winthrop served as the governor of Massachusetts Bay; for all of those years he was the heart and soul of the enterprise.

When Winthrop and the first substantial body of Puritans arrived in North America, a smaller colony to the south of Massachusetts Bay had already been in place for a decade. The Plymouth settlement, with more modest goals and a more modest sense of itself, was the outpost of a separatist Puritan movement. Unlike the Massachusetts Puritans, who always claimed to be only reforming the established Church of England, the Plymouth separatists had given up on official Anglicanism. In search of free space in which to pursue their less comprehensive vision of what the Lord desired, these separatists in 1608 had departed for the greater tolerance found in the Netherlands. But after watching their children take on Dutch ways, they looked farther afield for a place where they might be left alone. After contracting with London merchants for transport and supplies, about forty of the separatists (with sixty others to fill up the ship) embarked on the Mayflower for an ill-defined North American destination.

They arrived at Cape Cod Bay in November, and before the first winter was past about half of their tiny band,

MARK NOLL, *Professor of History at Wheaton College, is the author most recently of* America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln *(Oxford University Press).*

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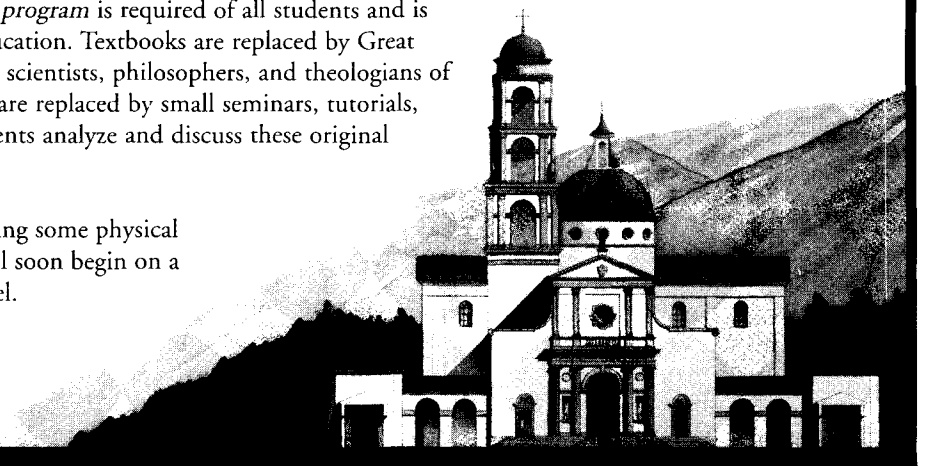

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including the governor, John Carver, had succumbed to cold or disease. As the new leader for their struggling venture, the colonists chose a farmer-weaver, William Bradford, who in 1621 was thirty-one years old. Until his own death in 1657, Bradford would serve nearly continuously as governor of this colony. For many of these years he occupied his scant leisure hours in writing a history of the settlement. Perhaps even more than Winthrop for Massachusetts, William Bradford for Plymouth was the one necessary person.

THE NEARLY simultaneous publication of two solid books on Winthrop and Bradford—Francis J. Bremer's *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father* and Douglas Anderson's *William Bradford's Books:* Of Plimmoth Plantation *and the Printed Word*—offers an unusual opportunity to reconsider the leaders who more than any others insured that their settlements would not fail. Bremer's comprehensive biography of John Winthrop rests on prodigious research in both English and American sources and is a fitting climax to a productive academic career. Douglas Anderson's volume is a substantial analysis of the form and content of Bradford's history of Plymouth studied against the era's reading practices, publishing conventions, and scriptural interpretations.

In different ways, these books describe leaders of rare quality. But were Winthrop and Bradford more than just effective colonists? Were they, in fact, "American founding fathers," as the claim made for Winthrop in Bremer's subtitle suggests? The question of what Bradford and Winthrop offer the American polity *now* depends on what they were *then*.

First, however, it must be noted that authors who write on Winthrop and Bradford know that they face daunting competition. For Winthrop, a short study by Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma*, published more than forty years ago, remains a model. Morgan could not deal comprehensively with all particulars of Winthrop research, but he wrote with unusual wisdom and grace ("the central Puritan dilemma [was] the problem of doing right in a world that does wrong"; and of Winthrop's death in 1649, "On March 26 he reached what in life he had never sought, a separation from his sinful fellow men"). The result is an intimidating standard.

For Bradford, the competition is provided by published versions of his own manuscript. That work was known to early Massachusetts historians, but then was lost during the American Revolution, only to be discovered during the early 1850s in the library of the Bishop of London. A published edition soon followed, and then in 1952 Samuel Eliot Morison brought out a version entitled *Of Plymouth Plantation*, which has been read with much appreciation, primarily because of how clearly it presents Bradford's extraordinary combination of personal qualities—matter-of-fact, pious, humble, observant, wise, magnanimous, and persistent.

Competition duly appreciated, Bremer and Anderson have nonetheless succeeded in their own efforts. Bremer in particular has rendered an especially useful service for the more than two-thirds of Winthrop's life spent in England. Most important, Bremer shows how clearly the type of society Winthrop tried to build in Puritan Massachusetts was modeled on what he had experienced in Puritan Suffolk. Winthrop's grandfather, a successful cloth maker in London, had purchased monastic lands northeast of London, on the far side of the Stour River, when Henry VIII secularized England's monasteries as part of his break from Rome. Winthrop's father had become a substantial country gentleman, while retaining legal and business connections in London,

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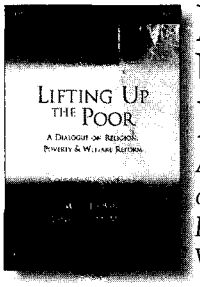

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and this was the path followed by his son.

Most of all, John was pointed toward the reform of the Anglican church and the pursuit of godliness through his family's extended Puritan connections. "Puritan," then as now, was an ill-defined word that covered many kinds of reformers, a fact that became obvious in Massachusetts when those who had united in opposing King Charles I strained against each other in efforts to get reform right in New England. In Suffolk's Stour River Valley there flourished a steady and determined, but also moderate, variety of Puritanism, one marked by eager cooperation between magistrates and ministers, a basic confidence in the precedents of English common law, and an expectation that God-given charity could effectively shape a godly society. In other words, as Bremer shows in great detail, Winthrop's Massachusetts mirrored one of the most thoroughly, but also one of the most humanely, Puritan regions of England.

Along the way Bremer multiplies reasons for regarding Winthrop with great respect. People who still take their cues from such misguided authorities as H. L. Mencken and Vernon Louis Parrington and think of the Puritans as desiccated killjoys just don't get it. Or at least they have never tried to get John Winthrop. When in his last decade he was impoverished by the chicanery of his steward, Winthrop went on without complaint in much humbler circumstances than he had known in either England or the Bay. During the trying days of early settlement, he gave away corn and other food with no thought of repayment. In handling the disputes of which daily life in Massachusetts was full, he was unfailingly humble, flexible, lenient, charitable, and fair. What he proclaimed about "Christian Charity" in a famous sermon preached as the Puritans set off to New England (and often quoted out of context to invoke an exceptionalist American "city on a hill"), he exemplified year after year in his faithful service to the colony.

The Winthrop of Bremer's biography is not markedly different from the figure portrayed in Edmund Morgan's landmark volume. Only we have more Winthrop here, more insight into the rock from which he was hewn, more reasons to admire his wisdom in directing Massachusetts Bay, and more opportunity to reflect on Puritanism at its best.

Douglas Anderson's treatment of William Bradford is concerned with a

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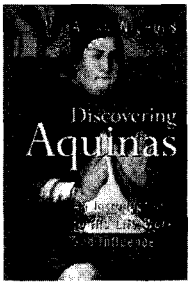

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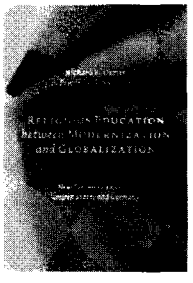

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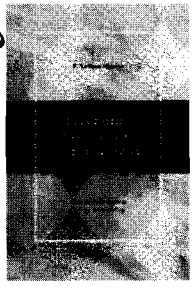

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narrower set of questions, but it too serves its purposes well. The manuscript that Anderson presents as *Of Plimmoth Plantation* (with spelling following Bradford's own usage) was the fruit of a life given over to words as well as deeds. Bradford was not among his era's educated elite, but he shared with many other separatists a lifelong devotion to the Bible and an intense engagement with theological literature. Anderson shows well how works like John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* outlined a literary path for earnest lay Puritans such as Bradford to follow. According to Foxe, "God hath opened the presse to preach," or in Anderson's paraphrase, "Books are opened, presses print, and preachers preach." For reformers like Foxe and Bradford these various activities were easily amalgamated. And so Anderson interprets *Of Plimmoth Plantation* as a book intended for edifying instruction, and as a work that developed from the preaching and reading of Scripture, particularly the Geneva Bible. By making sense of Bradford's manuscript, Anderson brings Bradford himself closer.

But should Winthrop and Bradford be considered American founding fathers, especially since they presided over societies that were mostly pre-republican, pre-democratic, pre-egalitarian, and by modern standards not pluralistic at all? To be sure, Puritan fear of arbitrary government did anticipate later republican fears of unchecked political power. Puritan insistence upon predestination and election did create a certain democracy of sanctity, since divine grace stood as near to the lowliest peasant as to the loftiest lord. Plymouth also featured equal opportunity, equal access, and equal treatment under the law in rare measure for the seventeenth century. And by allowing Rhode Island to exist as unregulated free space, the Puritan colonies acknowledged, if they did not approve, the existence of an unusually bold experiment in freedom.

Yet in their main efforts, the colonies led by Winthrop and Bradford resisted what have become American commonplaces. The Puritan distrust of unchecked authority was Augustinian and grew out of suspicion of human nature; it was not humanistically republican and oriented toward the potential of human self-creation. As for democracy, Winthrop boldly asserted during one of many public standoffs on how to run Massachusetts what most of his respected peers also believed: the liberty that Massachusetts sought was the freedom to do "that only which is good, just, and honest." It was a freedom "maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority." With respect to egalitarianism, no one in the Puritan world held that personal rights were more important than the orderly godliness of the community as a whole. And pluralism? The whole purpose of braving the perils of the deep and of the American wilderness was to build a unitary society for people of like mind. If you dissented from the will of such a community, you could in fact exercise a "negative freedom," but only to take off for Rhode Island.

From another angle, however, both Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth eventually succeeded in large part because they mastered the art of self-government. What now is described as "civil society" was taking shape remarkably in these Puritan colonies. Winthrop's dislike for carefully codified legal systems grew from his belief that God's rule of His people could lead them to social harmony, but only if the godly got to work in voluntarily attending to their own problems. The driving force behind the Plymouth colony was Bradford's similar trust in God's sovereign rule, linked with confidence in the godly themselves to do what was needed for a healthy society to emerge. In these terms, the Puritan colonies remain relevant to the American present, at least to the degree that self-government remains important in America.

Once we have glimpsed a connection between ideals of self-government promoted in seventeenth-century New England and the twenty-first-century United States, however, a further question of great moment arises. Does the relative success that the Puritans achieved in self-government require or depend on their self-consciously religious (or with greater historical accuracy, self-consciously *Christian*) convictions? That is the kind of thought-provoking question that must be addressed in order to decide whether John Winthrop and William Bradford should be considered "American founding fathers." It is a question now made much more approachable because of the estimable labors of Douglas Anderson and Francis Bremer.

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Common Sense and Common Law

COMMON-LAW LIBERTY: RETHINKING AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM. By JAMES R. STONER, JR. *University Press of Kansas. 208 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by Robert F. Nagel

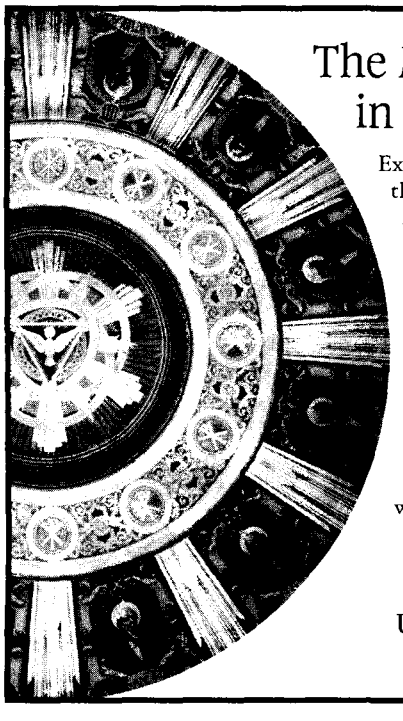
FOR MOST PEOPLE the term "common law" summons up quaint images of wigged British judges and piles of dusty law books. For many practicing lawyers and law professors such images represent the surface of a deeper and unamusing reality, an archaic system of legal thought. In that system judges superstitiously thought they could discover in prior cases an objective reality called "law." Modern legal thought, so the story goes, is more realistic. It understands that judges inevitably make policy while deciding cases, and suggests that in doing so they should go beyond legal precedents to consider abstract moral principles, welfare maximization, and high political purposes. James R. Stoner, Jr., a political scientist, has some shocking news for those holding this conventional view. The common law, he says, is neither superstitious nor gone; indeed, if we would open our eyes to this "still-living tradition," some of the worst attributes of modern constitutionalism might be abated.

Common-Law Liberty: Rethinking American Constitutionalism, like the tradition of common law judging that it describes, seeks to rise above politics to draw on and appeal to a more general consensus. For example, despite Stoner's evident conservative inclinations, he strains to find common law craftmanship in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the notorious case in which the U.S. Supreme Court refused to reverse *Roe v. Wade*. He sees limitations as well as strengths in aspects of Justice Antonin Scalia's constitutional jurisprudence. Stoner emphasizes that the common law allowed governmental restrictions, not only to protect against license in the use of speech but also in the use of property. He severely criticizes the modern Court's treatment of the family because that treatment ignores traditional understandings of marriage, but he disavows any intention to turn those older understandings into permanent constitutional requirements. And he separates himself from conservatives who sneer at the idea that legal meaning can change organically.

This effort to rise above ordinary politics requires the reader to pay careful attention, for it will be easier to assume that Stoner has a right-wing program than to notice his evenhandedness and his qualifications. But to miss the ways in which this book transcends ideology would be to misunderstand the nature of Stoner's undertaking. That undertaking is primarily appreciative. Stoner wants to "cast light on what makes American constitutionalism a vibrant tradition and an important model of the political practice of human liberty."

The substance of Stoner's thesis is that the common law is not some vestige of primitive thinking that unaccountably lingers as an embarrassment to modern realism but is rather an unrecognized resource. Fidelity to prior cases, in this view, is not unthinking legalism but a way to build from experience and the wisdom of others; it is not antiprogressive either, because the common law requires that prior judicial decisions be gradually reformed into a coherent whole that is adapted to changing circumstances. Legal processes honored by the common law, including adversarial argument and a central place for juries, allow for full attention to factual circumstances and provide a role for practical knowledge. The emphasis on unwritten (or customary) law, the tendency to enumerate specifics rather than to assert principles, and even the common law's historical provision for peremptory challenges in jury selection are all aspects of a

ROBERT F. NAGEL *is the Ira C. Rothgerber, Jr. Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Colorado Law School.*



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deeper recognition that law should rest on intuition as well as reason, on consent as well as force.

Stoner makes a convincing case that the common law tradition was to some extent incorporated into the American Constitution and has persisted in important, if largely unrecognized ways to the present day. For example, he shows that the original understanding of freedom of speech represented not merely a triumph for enlightenment rationality but also an adaptation to the circumstances of the New World of the British position on seditious libel. The eventual accommodation between the Federalists and the Republicans denied the national government any authority to regulate speech critical of the state but allowed such regulation at the state level, subject to an enhanced power for the jury. This meant that American freedom of speech protected much more than the British common law's condemnation of licensing schemes, while nevertheless retaining some part of that law's insistence on the ideas of individual responsibility and of the possibility of consensus about what kind of speech is important. Turning to modern cases, Stoner suggests that the Court is increasingly blind to this aspect of our free speech heritage. By extending the protections for speech into areas like defamation, profanity, and fighting words, the Court is constructing an absolute right while undermining our devotion to truth and personal responsibility, which are what make the right worthwhile in the first place.

Stoner works through a range of areas—including the free exercise of religion, family law, racial discrimination in jury selection, patronage, property rights, and even the growth of transnational governmental institutions—to generate similar insights about the persistence and potential usefulness of common law thinking. To take the most controversial issue, on the right to abortion Stoner claims that the Supreme Court's emphatic refusal in *Casey* to overrule *Roe v. Wade* was an instance of common law respect for precedent. But he notes that in *Casey* this respect for precedent was severed from respect for traditional legal understandings of both the family and the morality of abortion. Stoner observes, "It seems imperative that the [full] meaning of common law be considered if the fracture . . . in our polity brought on by abortion is to stand any chance of being healed."

Of the many important questions raised by this book, perhaps the most

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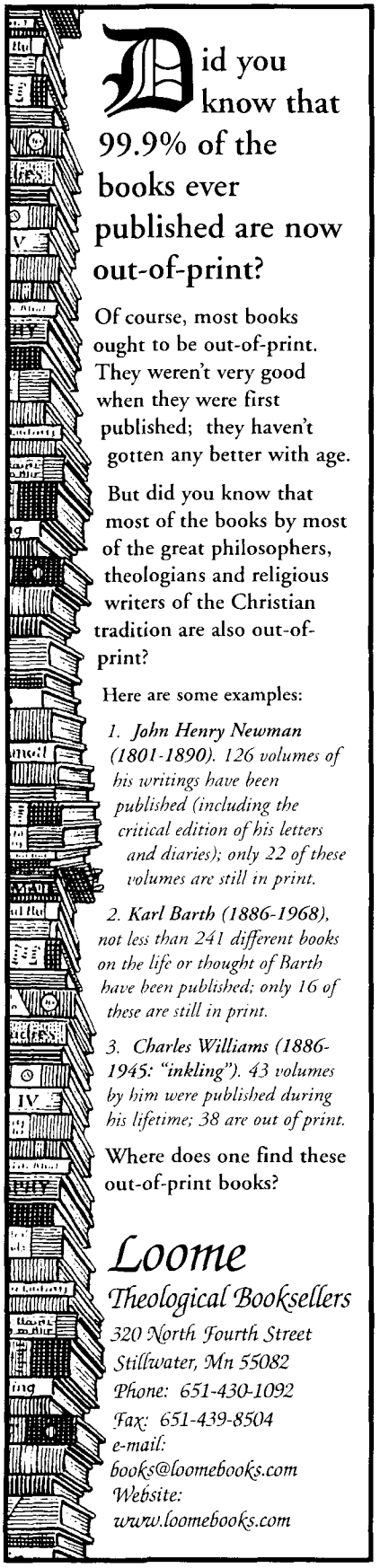
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basic is this: If common law thinking remains an important aspect of our constitutional law and if it is, as Stoner convincingly insists, an attractive aspect, why are both liberal and conservative Justices so blind both to its presence and its usefulness? One bleak possibility was suggested years ago in a brilliant essay by the late Michael Oakeshott, who argued that the modern rationalist does not recognize his own reliance on practical knowledge because rationalism in politics "involves an identifiable error, a misconception with regard to the nature of human knowledge." Accordingly, it is possible that modern jurists and legal scholars are not merely blind to the virtues of the common law; it is possible, instead, that they reject the possibility that the kind of knowledge honored by the common law is knowledge at all. Consequently, they can respond to criticisms and failures only by relying more heavily on the kind of technical knowledge that they do recognize. They might be, as Oakeshott said of rationalists generally, "essentially ineducable."

An alternative explanation is that modern judges are in fact not entirely blind to their continuing reliance on common law methods and that their respect for those methods has under modern conditions actually become part of the problem. Consider the common law's image of the judge. He is a professional, a conveyer of unwritten wisdom, an interpreter of deep traditions, an architect of law's intellectual coherence, a discoverer of higher law. To a large degree this exalted image is the image that the judges today have of themselves, and it is also the image that has been promoted by enthusiastic constitutional scholars. Thus, it is possible that federal judges (and their boosters in the legal academy) are not blind to the common law but are blinded by it.

Stoner never fully adopts this view, for he would regard arrogance as a corruption, not an expression, of the common law. But he does note in several places the arresting fact that two of the great constitutional excesses of our time—the relentless expansion of protections for harmful speech and the creation of the right to abortion—both have roots in opinions written by the greatest common law jurist of modern times, the second Justice John Marshall Harlan. Stoner may well be right that the common law conception of judging became dangerous when it was severed from its foundations in Christianity and natural law and that a fuller appreciation of common law traditions could reintroduce federal judges to the wisdom of restraint and the virtue of prudence. But it is also true that the common law contributed its own combustible potential to our present predicament.

STONER'S WRITING IS itself a demonstration of some of the admirable qualities that he sees in common law thinking. Since his purpose is to provide a fuller appreciation of the reality in front of us, he avoids grand theory and urgent recommendations. He pays careful, respectful attention to the specifics of cases that have been decided, but his reflections on these cases are not complacent or narrow; indeed, they are offered for the purpose of opening the possibility of incremental improvement for the whole enterprise of constitutional governance. While his writing is clear and often elegant, his points are subtle and emerge quietly from detailed examination of complex materials. In this way he seeks to enlist our consent rather than browbeat us into submission. All of this means that Stoner's style, like the nature of his basic undertaking, demands a great deal from the reader. But for those who are tired of the strident argumentation and overly ambitious system building that is so often found in constitutional scholarship, Stoner's book will be a welcome and valuable relief.

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Taming the Vindictive Passions

GETTING EVEN: FORGIVENESS AND ITS LIMITS. By JEFFRIE G. MURPHY. *Oxford University Press. 152 pp. $21.*

Reviewed by Daniel P. Moloney

In 1995, at ceremonies marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the liberation of Auschwitz, Elie Wiesel made the following prayer: "God of forgiveness, do not forgive those who created this place. God of mercy, have no mercy on those who killed here Jewish children." Such a prayer makes many people uncomfortable and provokes some thorny theoretical and practical questions: Are there any unforgivable acts? Isn't there some point after which Germany and the German people can be forgiven? Is hate ever a virtue?

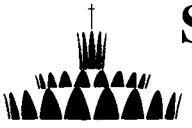
The tensions between justice and compassion, forgiveness and order provide deep conceptual puzzles of the sort that analytic philosophers usually like to tackle, though surprisingly few do so in any depth. Fortunately, among those few is Jeffrie G. Murphy, Regents Professor of Law and Philosophy at Arizona State University, whose *Getting Even: Forgiveness and Its Limits* is a well-written and accessible yet deeply serious examination of the costs of forgiveness and the dangers of cheap grace.

Murphy began his career in philosophy of law as a leading defender of retribution as the primary justification for criminal punishment, and he still retains a tough-minded appreciation for the retributive idea and its supporting emotions of anger, vindictiveness, and resentment. But in 1988, Murphy coauthored a book with Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, and it seems to have marked a turning point in his thinking and career. Hampton, who died in 1996, was at the time a young political philosopher at the University of Pittsburgh and a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers. As a Christian, Hampton had always assumed that forgiveness was a duty and thus an unqualified good, but Murphy's writing provoked her to defend these assumptions. They turned their exchanges into a stimulating collaboration, bringing a variety of literary and religious insights to bear on this complicated philosophical question. Hampton's arguments forced Murphy to rethink his position significantly from the beginning to the end of the book, and apparently to rethink even more. In *Getting Even*, the sequel to *Forgiveness and Mercy*, Murphy announces that he has left behind his "militantly secular worldview" and has become a practicing Anglican.

As the subtitle of the new book suggests, Murphy still thinks there ought to be limits to forgiveness, even for Christians. His main argument relies on the idea that too-hasty forgiveness can show a lack of respect for oneself, as in the S. J. Perelman quip, "To err is human; to forgive, supine." When we are the victims of evil, it is natural and even likely that we will resent, be angry with, and even hate the person or persons responsible. Murphy calls these "the vindictive passions," and in the first part of the book, he argues that they play a morally valuable role in our laws, our personal relations, and our psyches.

WE ARE USUALLY vindictive when someone fails to grant us the respect

DANIEL P. MOLONEY *is a doctoral candidate in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. His article "The Tribunal of Mercy" appeared in the March 2003 issue.*



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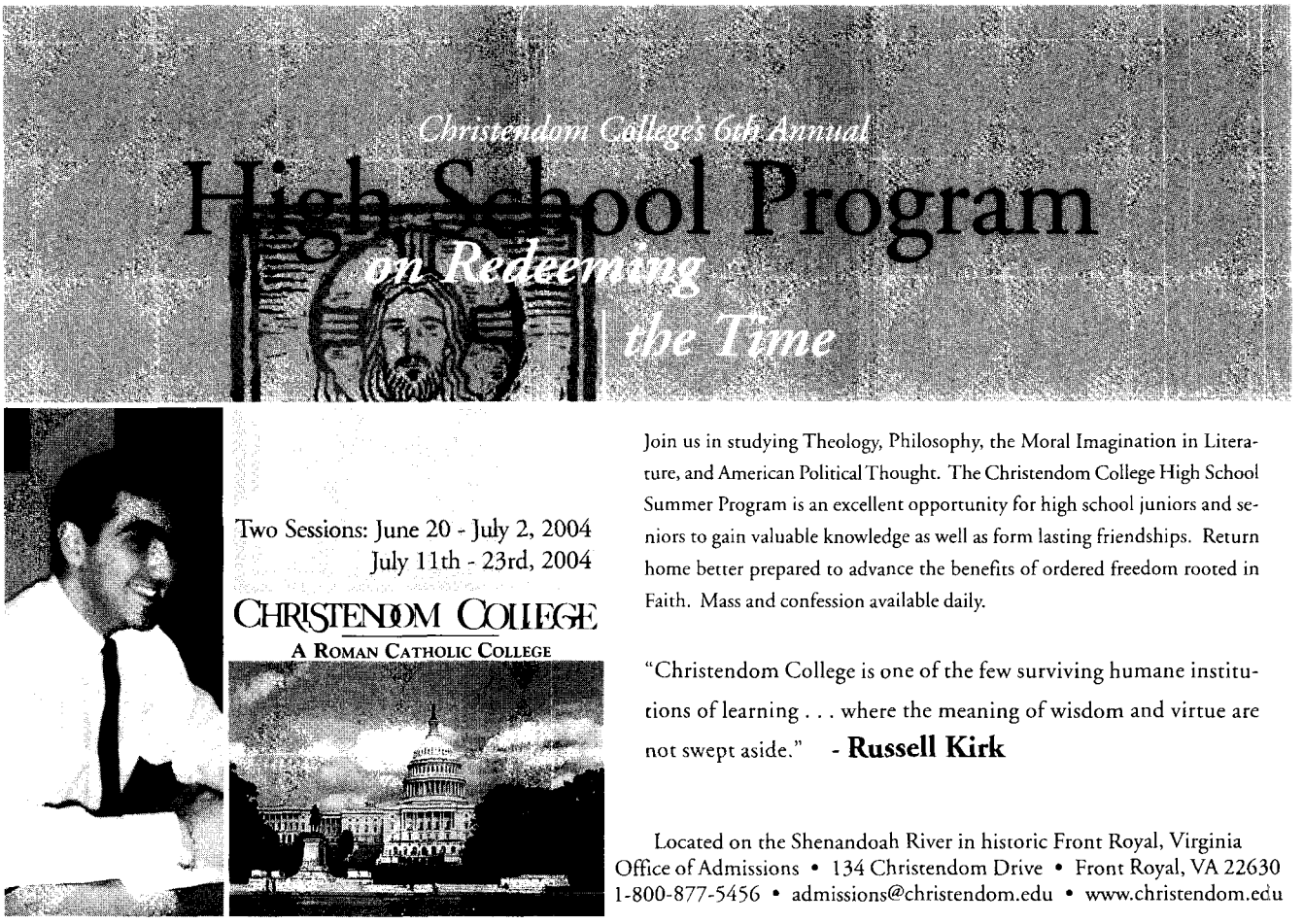
or regard that we are due. We are angry at the injustice that their actions represent, and so our vindictiveness reflects an appropriate sense of justice. Aristotle made a similar point in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: there is a certain sort of anger that, if our passions and desires are correctly ordered, we *ought* to have towards violations of the good. When someone unjustly attacks our person or our society, we ought not to like it; indeed, not to have these emotions shows an inadequate love of the good.

The vindictive passions go further, though, by demanding *vengeance*, the infliction of suffering on the offender. A vindictive person is not satisfied until he knows that the person who wronged him has suffered appropriately. Punishment, on this view, is not about deterrence or the chance to rehabilitate the person punished. It's about making that guy suffer for what he did to me and mine, as in Wiesel's prayer for divine vengeance.

If we forgive too easily or grow too lenient in our criminal justice system, we may ignore the genuine harm done. Psychotherapists frequently encourage victims of abuse to forgive their abusers rather than hate them, believing that hatred will only eat away at their fragile psyches. Murphy warns that this advice can be dangerous if it encourages such people to lower their guards and allow themselves to be victimized again. Hate and anger can also get out of hand, of course, but they can strengthen us and help us muster the emotional energy to resist evil, thereby recovering our sense of dignity when we are humiliated or treated without respect. And if the vindictive emotions help us to hold on to our innate dignity, then it makes a certain sense to think that the vengeful behavior following on those emotions would also be in the service of justice and human dignity.

Murphy suggests that this account of vengeance explains the otherwise puzzling fact that it seems just for us to punish murder more severely than we punish attempted murder. If our goal in punishing were simply to deter future crimes, it would seem that we should discourage people from attempting crimes, and not just from accomplishing crimes. So it ought to be irrelevant to the sentence that, say, the bullet accidentally missed its target. That we do regard it as relevant suggests that behind our laws there is a spirit of vindictiveness, a desire to pay back the criminal for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the damage he actually causes. It is easier to forgive someone if there is no serious harm done.

The second part of the book is an examination of forgiveness in light of Murphy's defense of hate. Murphy defines forgiveness as forgoing vengeance and overcoming the vindictive passions. If he's right that these acts are good, Murphy thinks, it explains why true forgiveness is so hard. It's not the difficulty of controlling a strong passion like a bad temper; it's the difficulty involved in making a complex moral judgment, the difficulty of "knowing how far one can go in the direction of forgiveness without compromising *values of genuine importance*." If the vindictive passions can be "instruments of our self-defense, our self-respect, and our respect for the demands of morality," then in forgiving we make ourselves vulnerable and we risk losing our respect for ourselves and for the common good. We also risk the sin of scandal, suggests Murphy, because "failing to resent (or hastily forgiving) the wrongdoer runs the risk that I am endorsing that very immoral message for which the wrongdoer stands."

These objections disappear, though, if we demand that the wrongdoer repent before he is granted forgiveness. By repenting, he comes to share the appropriate vindictive attitudes towards his own wrongdoing. If he is truly remorseful he will inflict more suffering on himself due to his guilty conscience than could be exacted from him were he defiantly unrepentant—and all of this happens without the difficult and costly work of punishing him. We can forgive him because he can't forgive himself.

Of course, repentance has to be sincere for this process to work, and here we come up against the riskiness of forgiving—the chance that we'll be taken for suckers. When we forgive, we release ourselves from our righteous anger and restore our relationship with the wrongdoer, but we take a chance that this relationship will be abused again. While Murphy is among the few philosophers examining this problem on the level of the individual person, there is a fair amount of philosophical literature on the analogous question of whether the state can show mercy in criminal punishment. In his subtly argued chapter "Repentence, Punishment, and Mercy," Murphy takes the reader through the major issues covered in this literature. He addresses many topics—this short chapter alone could take an ethics class several weeks to unpack—but he has good judgment about what are the deeper issues and what can be skipped over.

Murphy is especially interested in exploring what the philosopher Herbert Morris has called "the paternalistic theory of punishment," which claims there is something intrinsic to punishment that can lead a criminal to genuine repentance and moral reform. Just as punishing a child teaches him that mommy really doesn't like it when he does that to kitty, so criminal punishment communicates to the criminal that society regards his action as wrong. In other words, it communicates something about the nature of the wrong, and it gives him a chance to consider (and hopefully accept) the content of this communication. If it works, punishment can lead to repentance. This theory is heavily criticized—in some circles, "paternalistic" is synonymous with "oppressive"—but Murphy, for reasons left implicit, finds it fairly attractive. I suspect he finds it attractive because if it works, it allows him more easily to defend punishment to Christians.

I FOUND the first seven chapters of the book frustrating, because most of Murphy's answers were at best provisional. In the last two chapters, however, as he shifts from the explicitly secular framework within which he had been working to an explicitly Christian point of view, the reason for the tentativeness of his conclusions becomes clear: Christianity changes almost all the calculations about forgiveness. It teaches that man is fallen and so is probably more deserving of the harm that comes to him than he is likely to admit. It teaches that even criminals are precious children of God, who (it can be hoped) might undergo a conversion. And it reminds us that the universe is providentially ordered, and that God will bring good out of evil. This last point is most important because so much of the earlier justification of vindictiveness and punishment rests on the assumption that since everything in the struggle against evil depends on us, we cannot let down our guard. Murphy writes, "If I think that I alone can and must make things right, then I risk taking on a kind of self-importance that makes forgiveness of others difficult if not impossible." Trusting in God's providence, on the other hand, guards us against overreaching in our sense of responsibility.

At the same time, Christianity can be quite compatible with criminal punishment and even capital punishment, given certain qualifiers. Christians clearly ought to oppose punishments that are motivated by hate or by indifference to human life. "Love does not forbid punishment," Murphy argues. "What it forbids is *punishment out of hatred*." Christians are called to visit prisoners in jail, not to abolish jails—the former acknowledges the humanity of the prisoners while still recognizing that their being in prison helps to control crime, promote the common good, and respect justice.

On Murphy's view, Christians can best justify punishment that promotes both the common good and the spiritual reformation of the criminal, where the latter seems possible. (Here's where the paternalistic theory of punishment would seem attrac-

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tive.) The task of spiritual reformation is dangerous, though, and requires great humility, since only God can know a person's soul in any depth. Therefore we ought to punish reluctantly, with humility and great caution, aware that zeal for punishment often turns out to be a mask for cruelty and *ressentiment*. We ought to be especially reluctant about capital punishment; Murphy defends a view (which he attributes to Augustine and the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*) that while the state has a right to execute, it is almost always wrong for the state to exercise that right.

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Getting Even is probably the best book to date on the costs and benefits of forgiveness. But its argument is limited by its schizophrenic nature. For over half the book, Murphy lays out arguments based on secular premises that he more or less abandons by the end. And to the degree that he does retain his views about the virtues of vindictiveness, he pulls back from the radical nature of the Christian view. Murphy is certainly right that Christians don't need to assume naïvely that the enemies they love are not their enemies, and so it is permissible to be prudent and defensive when dealing with them. But he is not persuasive when he claims that Christians ought to treat the vindictiveness that follows upon righteous anger as respectable and even as a virtue. If respect for one's self is rooted in being a child of God, then even the great humiliations of rape and torture should not cause one to lose that self-respect. If one believes that the people who do such things are created in the image of God, it is clear that they have obscured that image by their sins and ought thus to be pitied rather than hated.

Murphy mentions another purpose of vindictiveness, the affirmation of common moral values, but even this is not available to the Christian. The vindictive reaction to injustice, the desire to right the wrong, is inappropriate, a form of meddling, whenever one doesn't have responsibility or jurisdiction to take that action. Each person clearly has responsibility for his own behavior, and some very limited responsibility for the behavior of those he can influence, and so he ought to desire to make amends for his own wrongs.

But since Christians hold that no fallen man is able to restore justice to the world generally, no man can think he is burdened with that responsibility. *Ought* implies *can*, as the philosophical slogan goes. For someone who believes in a provident God, then, vindictiveness is pre-

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sumptuous—it presumes that one has the ability and the permission to set the world aright—and presumption is a species of pride. If that's the case, then vindictiveness is not one value to be weighed against forgiveness in a prudential judgment, but rather a sin that is always wrong for one who trusts in God. There still might be a need for (non-vindictive) punishment, but there does not seem to be a way to place limits on forgiveness without placing limits on love.

So Christians, at least, have to judge Wiesel's prayer at Auschwitz to be absolutely wrong. The understandable product of a life scarred by great evil, certainly. A forgivable wrong. But wrong nonetheless. And if even *that* anger and *those* vindictive passions are unacceptable, then hate and vindictiveness cannot ever be a virtue.

The Three Rings of Monotheism

THE MONOTHEISTS: JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND MUSLIMS IN CONFLICT AND COMPETITION. By F. E. PETERS. *Volume I:* The Peoples of God; *Volume II:* The Words and Will of God. *Princeton University Press. Volume I, 312 pp., $29.95; Volume II, 385 pp., $29.95; two-volume slipcase set $49.95.*

Reviewed by Edward T. Oakes

THE IDEOLOGICAL CLASH between monotheism and polytheism furnishes the world with one of its first examples of asymmetrical warfare. As St. Augustine pointed out, the logic of monotheism requires that it be at war with its pagan rivals, and vice versa, but with a twist that gives monotheism the upper hand: "The opinion of Socrates is that every deity whatsoever should be worshiped in just the manner ordained by that god. For that very reason, it became a matter of the supremest necessity with them [the Roman pagans] to *refuse* to worship the God of the Hebrews. For if they were minded to worship Him in a method different from the way in which He had declared that He ought to be worshiped, then assuredly they would have been worshiping not this God as He is, but some figment of their own imagination. On the other hand, if they were willing to worship

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J., *is Chester & Margaret Paluch Professor of Theology at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois.*

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Him in the manner which He had indicated, then they could not but perceive that they were not at liberty to worship those other deities whom He had forbidden them to worship."

That same aggressive logic applies not just to polytheists but—as we all know only too well—within the capacious monotheistic family too. Again, the problem lies not so much (or not just) in the iniquity of believers, but more pervasively in the logical structure of the religions themselves. All three monotheistic religions trace their origins back to a definitive revelation in history: Orthodox Jews claim that revelation culminated in Moses; Christians hold that Jesus Christ is the ultimate and definitive revelation of God; and Muslims confess Muhammad as the last and final prophet of salvation history. And this is precisely the rub: as Thomas Hobbes pointed out, no revelation can trump another, for to do so would be to step outside the circle of the elect recipients of that revelation, exactly what revelation forbids. Nor for Hobbes can revelation prove very effective even when it comes to refuting atheism: for if someone says that God spoke to him in a dream, this "is no more than to say he dreamed that God spoke to him."

F. E. Peters' new encyclopedic, indeed magisterial, survey *The Monotheists: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition* positions itself, as it were, between Socrates and Hobbes. That is, it grants, as St. Augustine's Socrates would wish to, the belief system of each religion on its own terms; but as the book's subtitle indicates, it also shares Hobbes' pessimism that these conflicting accounts of revelation can be reconciled, either irenically or polemically. Unless, that is, believers and nonbelievers throughout the world can at least try to imagine what it must be like to live in a quite altered religious system with its different view of God—just what this book seeks to achieve. Fortunately, despite the implied pessimism of the book's subtitle, Peters' style is remarkably chipper, even witty, without ever becoming on that account offensive or condescending. Like Jane Austen looking at Regency society, Peters cannot help but be amused at human affairs while still being able to appreciate the underlying seriousness of the moral/religious quest.

Perhaps what most emerges from this guide is not just the immense complexity of each religion but

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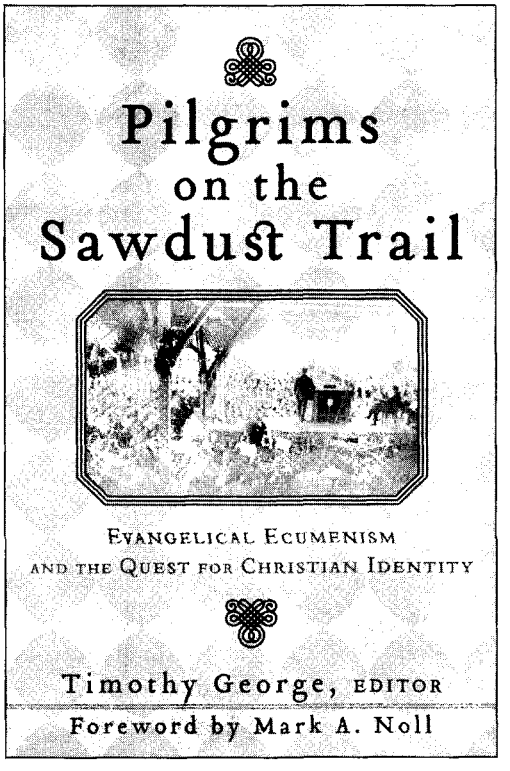

How can Christians of various faith traditions work together? What face can and should Christians today show the world?

Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail brings together scholars and church leaders to examine recent discussions and new opportunities for relationships among evangelicals and fundamentalists, Pentecostals, mainline Protestants, and Roman Catholics. Contributors include Richard John Neuhaus, Joel Carpenter, Richard Mouw, Gabriel Fackre, and Thomas Oden. A substantial foreword by Mark Noll is also included.

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Timothy George, editor

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more importantly how *layered* these religions have become, with their assorted historical accumulations and culture-specific bric-a-brac. Philosophical speculations on God tend to return time and again to certain well-worn themes, like theodicy and divine simplicity (the return of St. Anselm's ontological argument to the forefront of twentieth-century debate would be another example). But because each monotheistic religion began with a revelation that constituted—and continues to shape—a historical community traversing the vicissitudes of history, the complexities pile up and give to each religion a unique contour that no philosophy can blur, let alone obliterate. And that is just the point: no one can hope to understand these religions without taking into account these complex layers. For that reason Peters has written a two-volume work that serves multiple purposes: one can consult it as a useful desk reference, assign it as a textbook in college, or best of all, curl up with it as a riveting account aimed at the general reader.

The phenomena under display here are connected with each other in extremely volatile ways. Like it or not, each revelation, as St. Augustine noticed, comes with what Peters calls an "exclusionary clause" (meaning, no god but God can be worshiped). That clause further means that each succeeding revelation must also claim to have superseded and rendered otiose the previous one(s), lest its own exclusionary clause be abrogated or weakened:

> Christianity confidently announced that it was the successor to Judaism; and the Quran, far from concealing its connection to the other, earlier forms of monotheism, proudly proclaims that it is a successor to both. . . . But the claim is, like Christianity's, supersessionist. . . . Islam was, and is, not simply a warmed-over version of Judaism, or of Christianity for that matter, although some earlier Christians thought so. It was a unique vision—whether from God or Muhammad's own head is precisely what separates the Muslim from the non-Muslim—preached with great conviction, and in the end with great success.

Needless to say, such conflicting views about how God deals with the human race will lead to conflicts inside history, and some of the more sobering passages in this book survey the dilemmas and suffering of minority monotheists trapped inside the polity of the majority religion, an issue not resolved up to this day, as everyone knows. The German Enlightenment playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing tried to resolve this problem—not just the problem of tolerance but more crucially the dilemma of revelation's unverifiability and its attendant exclusionary clause—in his play *Nathan the Wise*, whose eponymous hero recounts a parable about a king who loved his three sons equally but only one of whom could inherit his entailed kingdom. Before his death the king ordered two rings to be made, identical in appearance to the genuine State Ring used for sealing all official documents. When the king died, each of the sons received one of these signet rings, but none could tell which was the real one. Only then was their father's will read out, which stipulated that each son leave the kingdom for a year—and upon

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their return the one who had done the most good for mankind would prove to have received the real ring.

As we already learned on September 11, 2001, such hopes of resolving this dilemma by ethical exhortation in the Lessing manner have proved illusory, and it will be the tragedy of our new century that we will have to keep relearning that lesson. This is because even the ethical systems of the three monotheisms are understood for the most part strictly in their revelational context, that is, in terms internal to that religion's worldview (as the doctrine of holy war in Islam proves). True, the concept of natural law can mitigate the fanaticizing effects of an internally generated ethic, but natural law often has only an attenuated hold on the imagination of many believers, Muslims most especially.

Another option would be to commit oneself to ecumenical dialogue before ethical consensus can be reached. But a full-throated ecumenism can arouse the suspicions of the devout, for the ecumenical ethos often comports itself as a religion of its own, or at least that is the suspicion. The only solution seems to be not the ethics of the Enlightenment, at least at first, but rather understanding—or more precisely, the kind of civilized, sympathetic, and self-confident appreciation that is willing to look inside the belief system of another without abandoning its own.

But let no one think such a task will prove easy. For example, in Lessing's parable, the analogue to the king is obviously God, but that leaves out Abraham, who could equally serve as Lessing's, or at least Peters', king; for to see how Abraham's legacy is contested by Jews, Christians, and Muslims gives some indication of how complex are their interrelations:

> For Jews, it is self-evident that they are Abraham's heirs because they are Abraham's descendants. . . . No one, neither Jews nor their non-Jewish contestants for the inheritance, has denied [that] claim: the Jews are indeed descended from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, later renamed Israel. Christians and Muslims have something else in mind, however. . . . Jesus' followers eventually took the radical position that blood descent was not the issue at all, nor was *obedience* to the terms of the Covenant as a number of Jews were beginning to understand that term, as a scrupulous observance of the Law. It was his *faith* that made Abraham righteous in God's eyes, and now once again it would be faith—this time in Jesus as Messiah and Lord—that would constitute the new Covenant that God had planned and the prophets foretold.

Not for nothing, in other words, did St. Paul hammer home the lesson that Abraham believed in the promises of God before he was circumcised. But, as the saying goes, be careful what you wish for. Faith is the most invisible of all realities, and

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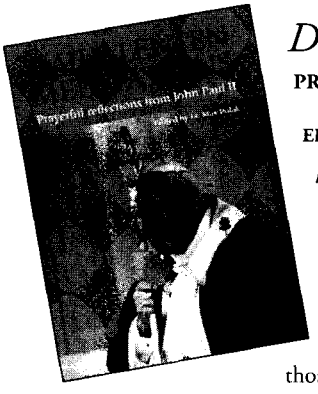

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like revelation anyone can claim it, which also means no one can refute it. No wonder Islam could spread so rapidly: the Muslim claim to descent from Abraham carries its own plausibility:

> In the Quran's view, the Jews and Christians, both recipients of a genuine revelation, proved unfaithful to the Abrahamic legacy. Their infidelity elicited another revelation, the Quran, delivered through the agency of a man signaled as "the seal of the prophets" (Quran 33:40), the final agent in God's providential revelations to humankind. Not only did the Quran both transcend and replace the Torah and Gospel; it commanded nothing less than a return to the "religion of Abraham" (3:68).

Professional ecumenists like to hope that stressing shared motifs and themes among these three religions will assuage, if not heal, the wounds of history, but a careful reading of Peters' survey (and not just of the Abrahamic motifs mentioned here) makes that seem unlikely. For no sooner does one touch on a common theme than the glaring differences pop up, even at first glance. Like a family in an Agatha Christie novel fighting and murdering over a large inheritance, the very things that unite the siblings make the dispute so, well, *internecine*, since each party disputes the legitimacy of the others. "Pogrom and blood libel, crusade and jihad ring all too familiarly through the mutual communications of the Children of Abraham." History exempts the Jews from that charge for the most part, but even there Peters is not sanguine: "The Jews stand somewhat aside in the equation, not because the fanaticism of their monotheism or the exclusivity of their claims is any less determined than that of the Christians and Muslims, but because of the somewhat less extenuating reality that Jews have never, at least until 1948, exercised sovereignty over their theological rivals."

In other words, this is a grim book—albeit one leavened by the author's remarkable lucidity and bemused sympathy for all three systems of belief. And he does manage to conclude on one modest note of hope: "The transparent hostility among Abraham's heirs seems often to have masked a common fear of

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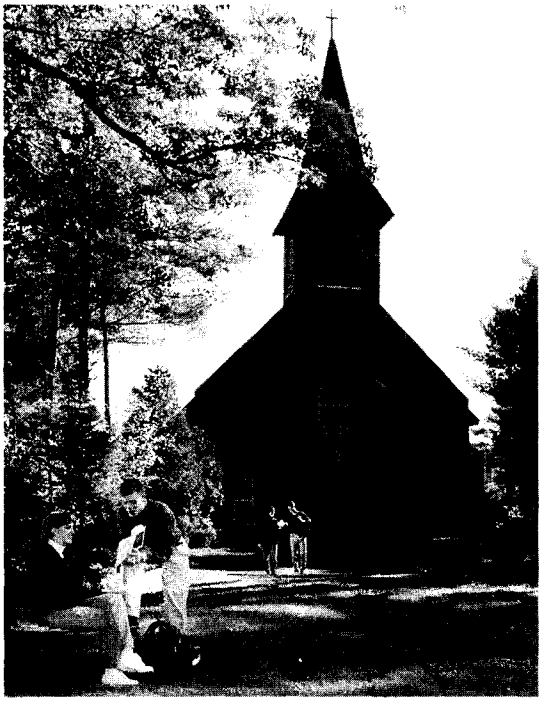

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each other's allure. Polemic among the three communities has in fact been produced mostly for home consumption, written to reassure its own believers that they, not their obviously (if we look closely) attractive rivals, were the Chosen People." Not much to build on, admittedly, but closet fascination may be the only alternative to endless war. Not the least part of Peters' achievement is that he has made that alternative seem a little more likely. He is a Lessing for our time—but, thank God, a far more realistic one.

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Caldwell-Sabatini Professorship Search Committee
Humanities and Western Civilization Program
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Review of applications will begin February 16, 2004, and will continue until the position is filled.

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BRIEFLY NOTED

QUESTIONS OF FAITH: A SKEPTICAL AFFIRMATION OF FAITH. By PETER L. BERGER. *Blackwell. 187pp. $24.95.*

The noted sociologist of religion offers a candid statement of what he believes, and why. Tracking the articles of the Apostles' Creed, the author of, among many other books, *The Heretical Imperative*, argues that the critical modern mind must be heretical in that we choose what to believe. Berger, however, is less a heretic than an idiosyncratic Christian who ends up intelligently affirming cardinal doctrines of Christianity, while repeatedly rejecting the authority of the tradition of which he is, albeit sometimes confusedly, part. Identifying with the nineteenth-century father of Protestant liberalism, Friedrich Schleiermacher, the author displays a deep animus against Catholicism, which, along with Bible fundamentalism, offers a false sense of certainty. Unlike fundamentalism, Catholicism has, he says, a magnificent but finally seductive intellectual tradition that, like fundamentalism, provides an illusory escape from the heretical imperative of individual decision. "I like to call these suppliers the certainty-wallahs; they carry on some very successful businesses in our bazaar of worldviews and value systems," Berger writes. Indicating but slight knowledge of or interest in Catholic or, for that matter, Protestant theology of the last half century, the author's mode is frequently apodictic, substituting assertions of his individual preferences for persuasive argument. There is also argument, however, and none is more effective than the unpacking of the creedal phrase "Creator of Heaven and Earth" in demonstrating the irrecon-

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cilable differences between biblical religion and religions of the East, notably Buddhism and Hinduism. *Questions of Faith* is sometimes provocative, but is more commonly an eccentric and surprisingly individualistic exercise by an author who elsewhere has written penetratingly about the social construction of human thought. Some readers will be put off by the frequently belligerent tone and absence of self-criticism. Berger contends, for instance, that there is no distinctive Christian morality because, if he were not a Christian, he would still think and live the way he does. He does not ask how the way one thinks and lives is formed by, or may be in tension with, a distinctive Christian morality. Nonetheless, the book will be of keen interest to students of Berger's work who have over the years wondered what he really believes about things that matter ultimately. They now have a bracingly frank answer that reveals Peter Berger to be—despite himself and to his own palpable discomfort—a more orthodox Christian than he or they may have suspected.

DEMOCRACY AND TRADITION. By JEFFREY STOUT. *Princeton University Press. 348 pp. $35.*

A professor of religion at Princeton noted for his earlier work *Ethics After Babel*, Jeffrey Stout is not a Christian but thinks Christians and other religious adherents have a legitimate voice in the public square. He enthusiastically embraces the tradition of "democratic faith" represented by Emerson, Whitman, and Dewey, and sharply criticizes more recent thinkers, such as Rawls and Rorty, who would exclude "comprehensive" (i.e., religious) accounts of reality from public discourse. Stout's main polemic, however, is directed against Alasdair MacIntyre, who in *After Virtue* and elsewhere, says Stout, caricatures the liberal tradition in advocating "the new traditionalism." At least equally guilty is Stanley Hauerwas, who, Stout argues at length and with considerable persuasiveness, has allowed his rhetorical recklessness and commitment to pacifism to undermine his potentially valuable contribution to a public ethic. Theologian John Milbank, champion of "radical orthodoxy," is also named in Stout's indictment, but, compared with the treatment of MacIntyre and Hauerwas, the critique of Milbank's work is surprisingly limited.

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Among the perpetrators of the "new traditionalism" is Richard John Neuhaus, who, Stout allows, is somewhat more sympathetic to liberal democracy but has gravitated toward militarism, unbridled capitalism, and the delusion of America's providential purpose in history. Stout endorses George Hunsinger's criticism of Neuhaus, a criticism that suggests that America is in a situation comparable to Nazi Germany in which the appropriate theological response is that of Karl Barth and the Barmen Declaration of 1934. We should not think, Stout declares, that America's leaders are interested in justice. "They extol humility, tradition, compassion, and democracy, while laying plans to rule the world. They propose their own will as the standard of right and wrong." Apparently it is the 1930s all over again. "To win the struggle against terrorism, we must win the struggle against terror within our own political community." Hauerwas' revival of virtue ethics, we are told at another point, plays into the hands not of approved radicals such as Dorothy Day but of reactionaries such as John Paul II. Well, there you have it. Despite the unexamined leftisms common to academic enclaves and his insouciant slanders in passing, Stout proposes a fetching view of public discourse as the disciplined practice of reason-giving beyond the boundaries of different comprehensive accounts of reality. His call for mutually respectful "conversation" as the proper mode of discursive practice is further weakened, however, by the unattractively reductive claim that the objects of his criticism are motivated by resentment of the hegemony of the liberal tradition. When one honestly disagrees with a viewpoint, one might naturally prefer that it not be so influential. That is not resentment. Stout obviously disagrees with those whom he calls the new traditionalists, but it would be grossly unfair to claim that he has written his book out of resentment of their growing influence and the support they give to traditions that he rejects. In sum, while Stout scores a few points—as in, for instance, highlighting instances of his opponents' rhetorical hyperbole—he leaves untouched the substantive argument that his liberalism is but one rival tradition claiming to be normative for public discourse. *Democracy and Tradition* is in many ways a revised, updated, politicized, and academically complexified version of John Dewey's *A Common Faith*, also published in 1934. Once again, liberalism, although in a somewhat chastened form, is ensconced as the arbitrator of discursive practices in public. Whether Stout's book will be any more persuasive than *A Common Faith* was in its day to those who profess a different faith seems doubtful.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: HUMAN LOVE IN THE DIVINE PLAN. by JOHN PAUL II. *Pauline. 602 pp. $24.95 paper.*

THE THEOLOGY OF THE BODY EXPLAINED. By CHRISTOPHER WEST. *Pauline. 530 pp. $29.95 paper.*

The generally informed reader has likely stumbled across the phrase "theology of the body," vaguely aware that it has something to do with John Paul II and is causing a stir among young people who are excited about a radically different way of thinking and acting with respect to human sexuality. From 1979 to 1984, John Paul devoted 129 general audiences to exploring in great detail the anthropological, moral, and spiritual dimensions of what it means that we are created as sexual beings. At the time, the reflections occasionally prompted tittering headlines, notably when the Pope explained the evil of "lusting" for one's husband or wife. Many of those who were really listening came to the conclusion that John Paul was proposing a dramatic development of doctrine in the Church's teaching about sexuality, marriage, and fulfillment of personhood. Certainly there

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is nothing comparable in papal teaching, and one would be hard put to find anywhere a treatment of sexuality so thorough and nuanced. John Paul has said that Jesus Christ is the answer to which every human life is the question, and the theology of the body sets forth a compelling Christian answer to the restless question of sexuality with its attendant yearnings to love and be loved. The first volume above contains the texts of the 129 audiences, plus some related documents of this pontificate. Some readers will find the texts heavy going—too thorough, too nuanced, too multilayered with complex biblical exegesis and philosophical excursus. And so the need for the second volume, which, as the title suggests, aims to make the teaching accessible to the general reader. Christopher West has largely succeeded in that purpose, and it is no criticism to say that, as interest in the teaching grows, there will be a need for additional popularizations that do not betray the profundity of what John Paul has proposed. Karol Wojtyla has written that, from his earliest years as a priest, he fell in love with human loving. Human sexuality, for all the problems attending it, is not a problem but a doorway opening to the possibility of participation in nothing less than the love that is God and the love that God is. It is quite possible that, in all of Christian history, there has never been an affirmation of sex and marriage as comprehensive and strikingly fresh as the "theology of the body." Catholics and other Christians who work with young people, prepare couples for marriage, or help people to cope with marriages in trouble will be richly rewarded in studying these books. Perhaps the best approach is to begin with the West volume, keeping John Paul's texts close at hand for reference.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

IN THE AFTERMATH OF SCANDAL

Aftermath does not mean it is over. The word literally means a second-growth crop or, more simply, the continuing consequences of what has gone before. The comprehensive report of the National Review Board (NRB), along with recommendations, is still scheduled for February 27. The bishops are bracing themselves for it. Some are unhappy that a demand to vet it in advance was denied. I am among those who thought the bishops made a big mistake in effectively declaring their inability to govern themselves by appointing the NRB. But the bishops created the board and gave it its mandate, and it is my impression that the members of the board are conscientiously doing what they were asked to do. The report is informally called the Bennett Report, since the chief writer is the prominent Washington attorney Robert Bennett. Also on February 27, the report of the research team put together by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice will be released.

The John Jay report will be in the mode of television's Sergeant Joe Friday, "Just the facts, ma'am." Since 1950, how many priests have engaged in, or been accused of, sexual abuse of minors; how many young people were victimized; how much has the Church paid out in damages or settlements. Several sources close to the research suggest that all three figures may be higher than has been generally estimated: perhaps five percent of priests nationwide, with eleven thousand victims, and a payout of about a billion dollars. Others, however, claim to know that those figures are too high. Presumably, we will all know come February 27. All but a handful of dioceses are reportedly cooperating fully with the John Jay team. On January 6, Bishop Wilton Gregory, president of the bishops conference, is scheduled to release a report of several hundred pages on the compliance of dioceses with the provisions adopted by the Dallas 2002 meeting of bishops. It is said that, with a relatively small number of exceptions among the 194 dioceses, bishops have complied with Dallas, although sometimes grudgingly. More intense public attention will likely be focused on the two reports of February 27.

Anecdotal evidence gives reason to believe that, as I have said before, in a few years the Catholic Church may be viewed as the very model of squeaky-clean precautions for protecting children. In one diocese it has been ordered that church choirs, if they have any members under eighteen, must be fingerprinted. This sounds ludicrous, and it is, but bishops are keeping their eyes on prosecutors, trial lawyers, and insurance companies, determined to deprive them of any chance in the future to claim there was carelessness in overseeing church-related activities that even marginally involve young people. A little of the ludicrous, it is thought, is a small price to pay for preventing the scandalous. If it is objected that a climate of trust is being replaced by narrow-eyed suspicion, the answer given is "better safe than sorry."

The written guidelines of another diocese prescribe that priests and other adult church workers must never under any circumstance be alone with a minor. Old-fashioned confessionals having been tossed out long ago, the rule is that "reconciliation rooms" must have a clear window with somebody posted outside to keep

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an eye on things. In that diocese such precautions are probably unnecessary since confession—now called the Sacrament of Reconciliation by almost nobody—has long since fallen into desuetude. But then, by now so much that was once deemed confidential and even protected by the confessional seal is in the hands of prosecutors or served up for the delectation of the public in the morning paper.

One priest who doesn't understand the new rules went to his bishop with a personal problem (unrelated to sex abuse) and was flatly told, "Don't tell me anything you don't want the district attorney to know." That is, perhaps, an extreme case. When I mentioned it to a crusty veteran who has been a priest for more than forty years, he said, "So what's new? From the time I was in seminary we knew that any priest who went to his bishop with a personal problem that could ever be used against him was simply an idiot." Maybe so, but that isn't the way it was supposed to be. In any event, it will possibly be a very long time before bishops can again believably present themselves as fathers and brothers to their priests. "Come to me if you have any problems," when said by a bishop, may take its place alongside gag lines such as, "I'm from the government and I'm here to help you."

If the February 27 report of the NRB gives a high grade for policing measures put in place, it will likely offer a grim assessment of the nature of abuse in the past and how cases were handled by many bishops. The now common estimate that less than two percent or even less than one percent of priests were involved may be countered by data from some dioceses indicating a rate of involvement many times higher. There will be most particular interest in what the NRB report has to say about homosexuality in the priesthood. When the scandal broke two years ago, the word routinely used was "pedophilia," perhaps because the press was taken by the nice alliteration of "pedophile priest." In fact, pedophilia, the abuse of prepubescent children, was a very small part of what went wrong. The overwhelming majority of cases, most observers think 90 percent or more, involved adult men with older teenage boys. The word for that is homosexuality, but among the bishops, it seems, that is still the disorder that dare not speak its name. And not only among the bishops, of course. Most reporters are terrified of anything that might be viewed as "gay bashing." It is not a question of gay bashing. It is a question of facing up to the fact that a large number of priests—nobody knows how large—suffer from same-sex attraction, and a significant number of them act on that desire. Keep in mind also that the above research and report does not address the number of priests engaged in noncriminal sex with adult men.

When the Pope called American cardinals and bishops to Rome in April 2002, it was announced that there would be a new and relentlessly searching visitation of seminaries. A decade ago there was such a seminary visitation which, almost everybody agreed, resulted in marked improvements, although many think that visitation was not as thorough as it should have been. Also after April 2002, word was put out that the Holy See was preparing new and rigorous guidelines about ordaining men with homosexual proclivities. Inquiries have been made, and it seems nobody knows for sure what is happening with these initiatives, although they have not been officially terminated.

Possibly a Blessing

The various dicasteries, or curial offices, in Rome are reportedly not agreed on what the policy should be in ordaining men suffering from same-sex attraction. Some influential prelates, both in Rome and this country, insist there should be an absolute ban on such ordinations, while others argue that, with proper formation, such men can be good and faithfully celibate priests. There will be most particular interest in how the Bennett Report addresses this and related questions. I will be surprised if the NRB gets into matters of faith, morals, or long-established ecclesiastical discipline, all of which are outside its mandate. But if it is going to do its job, it cannot help but speak candidly to the question of homosexuality in the priesthood. Positively stated, one hopes for a clearer recognition that celibacy is not just a matter of not having sex—whether with females or males of whatever age—but is a charism and calling that requires intense spiritual and moral formation. My hope is that the lay people of the NRB will bring a fresh perspective to this vexing question and maybe come up with proposals that transcend current ecclesiastical defensiveness, on the one hand, and liberal agitations for abandoning celibacy, on the other. Again, I thought the NRB a bad idea in the first place, but since we have it and since it has been going about its business with such seriousness, I am more than open to the possibility that, on this and other matters, it will turn out to be a blessing.

With respect to homosexuality, anyone familiar with American seminaries knows that we are a long way from the "pink palaces" of the 1970s and 80s described by Michael Rose in his somewhat sensational book *Goodbye, Good Men*. There has been a marked turn; seminarians and younger priests today are, in general, robustly orthodox, manly, and excited by the challenge of uncompromised fidelity. But that does not address the problem posed by those ordained earlier who constituted a "lavender mafia" that is still influential in

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some seminaries and diocesan chanceries. Anything smacking of a "witch-hunt" must, of course, be firmly rejected. But if the purpose is to get to the "root causes" of a scandal created by priests having sex with teenage boys, one might think that attention should be paid to priests who are prone to having sex with teenage boys. I know that suggestion has been called "simplistic," but it is hard to stifle the intuition that there may be more than an element of a cause-effect connection there.

Many priests have been removed or suspended from active ministry. The lowest estimate is a thousand; others who have been tracking developments say it is closer to two thousand. A relatively small number were charged, tried, and convicted. In many more cases, bishops and diocesan review boards have decided there is a credible accusation against the priest. In numerous cases, priests insist that they are innocent of any wrongdoing and don't know why they were removed. It is not, they say, just a matter of being judged guilty until proven innocent; they don't even know what they are supposed to be guilty of. This, too, is a result of the panicked provisions adopted by the bishops at Dallas in June 2002. The niceties of canon law, due process, and elementary decency have in many instances taken a beating. As one cardinal archbishop said after Dallas, it may be necessary for some priests to suffer injustice for the good of the Church. In the course of history, Caiaphas has not been without his defenders.

The Dallas provisions are provisional, and Rome is said to be keeping a close eye on how they are implemented, but to date there are no reports of direct interventions to right wrongs. A number of groups have sprung up to help priests who may be subject to unfair treatment, including Opus Bono Sacerdotii, a group of lawyers for which Avery Cardinal Dulles and I have agreed to serve as theological advisors. Catholics typically have a very high esteem for priests and the priesthood. I remember an ordination service some fifteen years ago where the bishop said to the newly ordained, "You are now priests. You would have to work very hard at doing things very bad in order to persuade the Catholic people not to love you." Obviously, many have taken up the challenge and succeeded.

When one brings up the question of priests being treated unfairly, reactions vary. By some the question is dismissed as a distraction from the greater wrong of what was done to the victims of sex abuse. The implication is not so much that two wrongs may make a right; it is just that we can only address one wrong at a time. Another reaction claims to be realistic, which is to say hardnosed: it's too bad some innocent priests may be hurt, but you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs, etc. Charming. But then, bishops have their own leadership credibility to worry about. One bishop of a large diocese publicly released the names of every priest who in the past fifty years had ever been accused of a sexual offense. Some of the priests, along with their unnamed accusers, were long since dead. Others were in nursing homes with Alzheimer's. The press praised the bishop for his "transparency." He burnished his reputation by trashing the reputations of his priests. Some father. Some brother. He is not alone in what he did. Other bishops were appalled, but the rule is that bishops do not criticize other bishops. It is called collegiality, which some people confuse with clericalism. There is a difference, although the difference is sometimes exceedingly difficult to define.

The absence of fraternal correction among bishops is a real problem. There is no necessary virtue in bishops publicly disagreeing with one another, although in the history of the Church some of the greatest bishops—Augustine, Anselm, and Borromeo come to mind—had the virtue to do it when necessary. Nor need the disagreement be public. Consider a recent meeting in which a lay person questioned leaders of the bishops conference about their appointment to the NRB of a layman who had a long record of very public support for the unlimited abortion license. The answer given was that the layman had been approved by his own bishop, and bishops do not question the judgment of a brother bishop. Little wonder some critics complain that the bishops run the Church as though it were their private domain when apostolic leadership is trumped by club rules.

The bishops must hold themselves, and be held, accountable. That has been said incessantly over these two years, and with justice. As for it happening, the picture is very mixed. Despite the universal acknowledgment that the bishops have primary responsibility for the scandals, not one bishop has voluntarily resigned. A few bishops who were complicit in abuse stepped down, but only after their wrongdoing was publicly exposed. And, of course, Cardinal Law was compelled to resign when it was apparent to all that the mess in Boston had spun out of control and, with Rome and the world claiming his attention, he was not minding the local store. In the corporate world, top leaders resign when things go radically wrong. Yet we have been treated to depressing vignettes of bishops in court copping a plea, earnestly declaring their deep, deep sorrow over what they did and failed to do, striking a deal with prosecutors in exchange for the freedom of the Church to govern itself, which it is not the bishop's right to surrender, in order to have charges dropped. Then, having been forced to confess them-

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selves miserable failures and having traded away the rights of the Church, they gather about themselves the tattered vestiges of their episcopal dignity and declare that they have absolutely no intention of resigning. Some accountability. And Rome, for its inscrutable reasons, appears to do nothing.

Moving On

At this point comes the obligatory proviso that the above does not describe most of the bishops. Not by a long shot. There are almost two hundred ordinaries, meaning bishops who head dioceses, and most of them are doubtless good, devout, hard-working, and reasonably competent. But the general picture is one of evasion, denial, and a reflexive bent to return to business as usual. Call it collegiality or call it clericalism or call it whatever, there seems to be a determined effort to, in the favored phrase of the justly embarrassed, move on. A reporter who covered the November meeting of the bishops conference says, "Watching management go about its usual business, one might get the impression that the scandals never happened." No doubt some bishops will take that as a tribute to their adroit handling of "the recent unpleasantness." Two years ago, even one year ago, observers were calling it the greatest crisis in American Catholic history. Some bishops were calling for a plenary council or extraordinary synod of bishops to examine what went so radically wrong and to amend their ways. Some bishops were speaking candidly about homosexuality in the priesthood, and also about the dangers of scapegoating innocent priests. A few even publicly agreed that there were three answers to the catastrophe: fidelity, fidelity, and fidelity.

But now the storm seems to have passed. That may change with the release of the report from the NRB. But no matter how bad the news, the media are distracted by a presidential election, and you can only go with so many stories about how many priests did what to whom and how many bishops paid what price to escape prosecution. After a while, episcopal plea bargaining will seem routine. People get used to almost anything. It is, I suspect, already the case that, for priests and people, bishops don't matter so much anymore; not as much as they were supposed to, and sometimes did. Catholicism in America has, unknowingly and perhaps ineluctably, taken another big step toward congregationalism. On the ground—with the exception of a few places such as poor, devastated Boston—parish life goes on, and even flourishes. There are thousands upon thousands of adult converts, renewal movements abound, collections are generous. Ask sixty-six million Catholics in the U.S. about the bishops and the usual answer, I expect, would be, "What bishops?" There are bishops, I do believe, who are greatly gratified that they have succeeded in making themselves largely irrelevant to the life of the Church as it is actually lived. Being irrelevant is better than being a public embarrassment.

Out of it all one might come to the conclusion that God loves babies, drunks, and the Catholic Church in America. There are bishops who have let me know that they think I have been entirely too hard on them. And after this little reflection, I suppose I will hear that again. But there is this that must be understood: many Catholics really believe that the bishops are successors to the apostles; that, in communion with Peter among us, they are anointed by God to teach and sanctify and govern; that they are to exemplify the courage of leadership with apostolic zeal; that they are to embody the holiness to which we are together called.

They believe that bishops should be the leaders that John Paul II said they should be in his apostolic exhortation of this past October, *Pastores Gregis*. Bishops must be, he said, faithful and effective teachers of the fullness of the Church's teaching. Being "pastoral" does not mean, at least not first of all, being a good listener and keeping all viewpoints in play. Nor does it mean knocking heads, although sometimes heads must be knocked to get the attention of those who are not listening. The choice is not between being a thug or a wimp. Being pastoral means being a good shepherd who feeds the flock with the life-giving food of Catholic doctrine. It means proposing the truth, in season and out of season, when it is popular and unpopular. Of course one must engage those who dissent from the truth, but one engages in order to persuade, and persuasion requires both patience and persistence. The salvation of souls is at stake, and a bishop or priest who does not believe that should find another line of work. Catholicism is an invitation to live the high adventure of fidelity, which is never confining but always an opening toward the immeasurably more that is promised and present in Christ and his Church.

Thoughtful Catholics know that it has not always, it has not even usually, been that way with bishops. They are not scandalized that bishops fall short of what *Pastores Gregis* says a bishop should be. But they also know the way it is supposed to be, and they have not given up on the way it is supposed to be. They remember what the Holy Father said at that April 2002 meeting, that out of the unspeakable sadness of this Long Lent must come "a holier priesthood, a holier episcopate, and a holier Church." And they weep for the bishops and the Church because there is slight evidence of that happening.

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THE PASSION OF CHRIST

The next issue will offer an extended discussion by Russell Hittinger and Elizabeth Lev of Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of Christ*, which is scheduled for public release on Ash Wednesday. I was invited to a screening of the almost-final version a while back. There were still some small technical wrinkles to be worked out, and special effects to be added. It is a gross understatement to say that it is an extraordinary film. It is certainly the best cinematic treatment of the passion or, indeed, of any biblical subject that I have ever seen. I strongly urge everybody to see it. (No, of course I don't get a cut.) The rating calls for "parental discretion," and some parents tell me they would not let their younger children see it, while others disagree. It is not violent, but it is extremely brutal—as brutal as the events it depicts.

I've been thinking a torrent of thoughts about the film, and maybe will have more to say when I see the final version after its official release. For the moment, just a word on the much, and inevitably, discussed issue of anti-Semitism. Father Augustine Di Noia, undersecretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, saw a screening in Rome and flatly declares: "There is absolutely nothing anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish about Mel Gibson's film." I agree. Di Noia adds: "What happens in the film is that each of the main characters contributes in some way to Jesus' fate: Judas betrays him; the Sanhedrin accuses him; the disciples abandon him; the crowd mocks him; the Roman soldiers scourge, brutalize, and finally crucify him; and the devil, somehow, is behind the whole action."

There is a complication, however, in that the film—in an unusual but by no means unprecedented way—portrays Pontius Pilate sympathetically. His "What is truth?" is presented not as cynically dismissive but as earnestly inquiring. So who are left as the really, really bad guys, the people who hated Jesus and were adamant that he be killed? By default, the answer is: the religious leaders and the mob they whip into a frenzy of bloodlust, all of whom are Jewish. But then, so are the members of the Sanhedrin who protest the proceedings, so are a large number in the crowd who are depicted as sympathizing with Jesus, so are Mary and the disciples, and, above all, so is Jesus. Jews one and all.

All that being said, is it possible that untutored viewers will come away from the film with the distinct impression that "the Jews" killed Jesus? It is more than possible. The same impression is more than possibly gained by reading the Gospel accounts, especially the Fourth Gospel. The film, with a few embellishments drawn from traditional piety, closely tracks the Gospels. The undeniable reality is that the salvation story—in all its dimensions of darkness and light, hatred and love, faith and unbelief—is enacted within the history of God's chosen people, the children of Israel. It is, through and through, an intra-Jewish story. How odd of God indeed, but so it was and, in ways that St. Paul calls a great mystery, so it is and will be until the End Time.

After the destruction of the second temple in A.D. 70, the Judaism of Jesus' time divided in two directions: the rabbinical Judaism that is today simply called Judaism and the Church which, in time, was composed mainly of non-Jews. That is to say, Gentiles were incorporated into the children of Israel by being incorporated into Christ, the Jew, who is the fulfillment of Israel's messianic hope. That at least is the Christian account. Contemporary accounts that are so fearful of any hint of "supersessionism" that they refuse to say that the Jews who accepted Jesus as Messiah got it right and the Jews who rejected him got it wrong are not believably Christian. *Nostra Aetate*, the document of the Second Vatican Council that is rightly viewed as the Magna Carta of a new era in Jewish-Catholic relations, does not hesitate to speak of the "authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead" in connection with responsibility for the death of Jesus. What it insists upon is that the descendents of those Jews are not guilty of what their forebears did. What the Council might have said more explicitly is that their forebears are also our forebears. As I argued in "Salvation Is from the Jews" (FT, November 2001), *Nostra Aetate* invites that affirmation in its opening line: "As this Sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it recalls the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock." Jews and Judaism are not alien, a reality outside the mystery of the Church, but are to be engaged by penetrating more deeply into the mystery of the Church, which is to say, into the mystery of Christ. Of course Jews, whether of the first century or the twenty-first century, object to being "co-opted" into the Christian story, but the Christian story is the only story that Christians have. And it is the only story that solidly grounds Christian solidarity with Jews and Judaism in something more than sentiment.

In any event, the Christian answer to the question of who killed Jesus is that we all did. Fr. Di Noia points out that the so-called blood curse—"Let his blood be upon us and upon our children"—is more a prayer than a curse; a prayer that we may all be washed in the blood of the Lamb, the blood we are

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guilty of shedding. If the untutored viewer of *The Passion of Christ* comes away thinking that "the Jews killed Jesus," the fault is not with the film. The fault is with the many people, Christian and non-Christian alike, who do not understand the inescapably Jewish matrix of the story of salvation. For that failure, Christian teachers bear the chief responsibility.

FT

DEFINING NEOCONSERVATIVE

For the last couple of years, the leftward press has been agitated about "the neoconservative conspiracy" that has presumably taken over the country. People frequently call me a neoconservative and I don't take it as a hanging offense. I was once regularly called a liberal, and sometimes a radical, but I just went about my business in accordance with a guiding quadrilateral that I adopted many years ago: "I hope always to be religiously orthodox, culturally conservative, politically liberal, and economically pragmatic." The big difference now, of course, is the debased definition of politically liberal, a debasement effected, above all, by planting the liberal flag on the side of the unlimited abortion license.

Recall the aphorism of Irving Kristol, the celebrated "godfather" of neoconservatism, that a neoconservative is a liberal who has been mugged by reality. A few years ago, Kristol said that neoconservatism was no longer a distinct movement, having been absorbed into mainstream American conservatism. Writing in the *Weekly Standard* he now takes that back. "The Neoconservative Persuasion: What It Was, and What It Is" argues that neoconservatism is precisely that, a persuasion. It is, he says, the persuasion of those who want "to convert the Republican party, and American conservatism in general, against their respective wills, into a new kind of conservative politics suitable to governing a modern democracy." He continues: "Neoconservatism is the first variant of American conservatism in the past century that is in the 'American grain.' It is hopeful, not lugubrious; forward-looking, not nostalgic; and its general tone is cheerful, not grim or dyspeptic."

Neoconservatism is also very different from conservatism in Europe, which is either nostalgic, dyspeptic, etc., or is what in this country is called libertarianism, meaning a fixation with economic and other freedoms but indifferent to culture. In America, Kristol writes, there is "a quite unexpected alliance between neocons, who include a fair proportion of secular intellectuals, and religious traditionalists." These unwonted allies "are united on issues concerning the quality of education, the relations of church and state, the regulation of pornography, and the like, all of which they regard as proper candidates for the government's attention." The influence of neocons, says Kristol, is derived from that alliance. "Because religious conservatism is so feeble in Europe, the neoconservative potential there is correspondingly weak."

Neocons, says Kristol, agree, inter alia, that patriotism is a healthy and natural sentiment, that the dream of world government in all its forms is a formula for tyranny, and that statesmen should be able to distinguish the nation's friends from its enemies. The last touches on foreign policy and the uses of military power, the questions that most concern the proponents of the neocon conspiracy. Kristol writes, "Behind all this is a fact: the incredible military superiority of the United States vis-à-vis the nations of the rest of the world, in any imaginable combination. This superiority was planned by no one, and even today there are many Americans who are in denial." The superiority came from America's direct involvement in major conflicts over the last fifty years. "The result was that our military spending expanded more or less in line with our economic growth. . . . The 'magic' of compound interest over half a century had its effect on our military budget, as did the cumulative scientific and technological research of our armed forces. With power come responsibilities, whether sought or not, whether welcome or not. And it is a fact that if you have the kind of power we now have, either you will find opportunities to use it, or the world will discover them for you."

Irving Kristol's summary description of neoconservatism is brisk, quotable, and for the most part right. I have no proprietorial interest in challenging the description. And he is, after all, the godfather. He once wrote a book titled *Two Cheers for Capitalism*, and that is about the measure of my enthusiasm for neoconservatism as he now describes it. There is also, however, a shadowed side of history, including American history, to which attention must be paid. Pondering it can be a way of wisdom, and need not be lugubrious. Forward-looking cheerfulness can easily slide into boosterism, and I'm not at all sure that "opportunities" is the right word for the use of our military superiority. These are not necessarily disagreements with Irving Kristol; they are more in the nature of cautions, and cautions that he would likely have included were he writing a longer article. Certainly there is no question about the need for "a new kind of conservative politics suitable to governing a

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modern democracy." As to whether the politics that claims my support will in the future be called conservative or neoconservative or something else, see the aforementioned quadrilateral.

FT

THE NUECHTERLEIN FACTOR

Among the constants since the premier issue of March 1990 has been the masthead listing of James Nuechterlein as Editor. With our next issue, his name will be replaced by that of Damon Linker. Jim has retired and moved back to Valparaiso, Indiana. He and Dot have been planning this for a long time, and all my arguments to the contrary were of no avail.

Jim was present at the creation. A good case can be made that, without him, there would be no FT. I invited him to New York to edit the predecessor publication, a quarterly called *This World*. I was then writing a monthly newsletter, *The Religion and Society Report*. When our association with our previous sponsor was rudely terminated in 1989, we combined the two publications and FT came to be. In the world of intellectual journalism, FT is a remarkable success, and I am often asked about the factors contributing to that. One indispensable factor has a name: Jim Nuechterlein.

Nuechterlein. As the receptionist has explained thousands of times over the years, it is pronounced NICKterline. And as I would add, it rhymes with constancy. "Oh wad some power the giftie gie us / To see ourselves as others see us," wrote Robert Burns. Jim is what one sees and, so far as I can tell, sees himself as others see him. He elevates from banality the phrase, "What you see is what you get." Greeting Nathanael for the first time, Jesus said, "Behold, an Israelite without guile." Nathanael, because he was without guile, asks, "How did you know me?" Jim is an Israelite without guile.

He was editor of the *Cresset*, a publication of Valparaiso University, when I in my immaturity published a book commissioned by the Lutheran Council–USA, *Christian Faith and Public Policy: Thinking and Acting in the Courage of Uncertainty*. Jim wrote a lengthy review of the book, obviously relishing what he discerned to be the birth of a neoconservative. He, by way of sharpest contrast, was a conservative pure and simple, having been, I suppose, mugged by reality in the cradle. Since then, we have both survived several seasons of political labelings, and have ended up being, well, whatever FT is. Ten years after that review, I asked him if he knew a young person who could help with the editing of *This World* and he, to my delighted surprise, volunteered his middle-aged self. Fourteen years later, he has, to my distressed surprise, succumbed to that curious convention called retirement.

There have been disagreements over the years, but never rancor or distrust. I wish he had written more for FT, and I think I have his promise that he will. As longtime readers know, his writing is marked by clarity, incisiveness, and charity, if not always respect, for opposing views. His virtues as a writer are his virtues as an editor. We are on the receiving end of an unremitting flood of unsolicited manuscripts, and for a while Jim assigned the job of "first reading" to junior editors. But then he thought better of it, fearing that wheat was being discarded with the chaff, and took upon himself the onerous task of reading everything, frequently discerning possibilities unseen by others. Nuechterlein rhymes also with conscientiousness. I suppose that I could count on the fingers of one hand the articles we published that he opposed, as well as those he favored that we declined, and, in retrospect, he was mostly right. (I expect he has been waiting a long time for that admission.)

It is not sufficiently appreciated that editing is a self-effacing vocation. An editor is the servant of both author and reader, although authors are sometimes less than grateful for the help. To be an editor is to be aware of the road not taken. When editing the work of others, one's own goes unwritten. The field of expertise pertinent to Jim's unwritten books is American political and cultural history. Maybe now they will get written, although not, I hope, at the expense of what he should be writing for FT. As an editor, he has given himself selflessly and without complaint. Ambrose Bierce somewhere said that a saint is a dead sinner well edited. I don't know about that, but I know we have published many splendid articles resuscitated by Jim Nuechterlein.

Jim worries that, with his departure, the journal might suffer from a deficiency of Protestant, and specifically Lutheran, sensibility. He is inclined to forget that the formerly Lutheran Editor-in-Chief is still in recovery. Moreover, and like most Lutherans, he is inclined to claim a Lutheran copyright for all aspects of the tradition he finds agreeable. If there is a sensibility that most marks this journal, I expect it is best described as Augustinian. After each month's issue we do a postmortem, and the most I could ever get out of Jim is that an issue is "very good." With some degree of frequency, I thought an "excellent" was warranted. But that is mainly a matter of different dispositions. We were always agreed, in good

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Augustinian fashion, that in a fallen world our best is but a faint intimation of, a feeble gesture toward, what ought to be.

I will sorely miss Jim. He has been an indispensable colleague and faithful friend. With gratitude and confidence, I welcome Damon Linker as his successor. Damon was chosen for many reasons, not least because Jim thought him the man for the job. It will be a touch lonely, however, going on without Jim. You may be assured—or warned, if you prefer—that I have no intention of joining him in retirement. There is always the tantalizing prospect of producing an issue that even Jim will admit is just a little better than very good. Meanwhile, for Jim and Dot we pray *ad multos annos*, and from Jim we look forward to all that writing he put aside for fourteen years in order to serve grateful authors, some of whom were not as grateful as they should have been, and none of whom was as grateful as I was, and am.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ You will soon notice a new name on the masthead. J. A. Gray succeeds Damon Linker as Associate Editor. John is a Californian, demonstrating the lengths to which we will go in preserving the ecumenical character of the journal. His wife and children have equipped him with an array of winter togs worthy of the Arctic, which shows, I suppose, how Californians view more normal parts of the country. John is an accomplished generalist—something much more special than being a specialist—with a background in editing, free-lance writing, and helping religious and other institutions get their message out. So far, he is getting along with everyone here and everyone is getting along with him, so we look forward to a long, productive, and convivial association. He also writes beautifully, so I hope readers will become accustomed to seeing his name on more than the masthead.

■ In the October 2003 issue, the editors set out in some detail what we think is the compelling case for a federal marriage amendment. An update on several aspects may be in order. Since the Massachusetts high court, by a 4-3 vote, mandated same-sex marriage, all the polling data indicate a growing rejection of the idea, plus rapidly increasing skepticism about "gay rights" more generally, especially when presented as a parallel to the civil rights movement of the last century. President Bush has declared that he supports marriage as an exclusive union between a man and a woman and has, albeit somewhat ambiguously, indicated his support for an amendment. Last fall there were efforts by backers of the amendment to add a provision that would ban, or at least discourage, states from passing civil union or domestic partnership laws. The amendment to the amendment would have specified that such arrangements could not discriminate against people in a nonsexual partnership. So, for instance, a daughter taking care of her mother could get whatever benefits gays might claim. Those efforts failed, and the wording of the amendment remains as cited in our editorial, although it is likely there will be changes by the White House or Congress along the way. Much attention has been paid a few conservatives who oppose the amendment. David Brooks, who left the *Weekly Standard* to become a columnist for the *New York Times*, has made clear that the paper's solid phalanx on the wrong side of the culture wars will not be broken. He now indicates that he is pro-choice on abortion and in favor of same-sex marriage. He apparently thinks the latter will, inter alia, domesticate the wild promiscuity of the gay subculture. This at a time when HIV and AIDS are again skyrocketing among gays who, it would seem, are not inhibited even by the prospect of disease and death. Brooks writes: "We are not animals whose lives are bounded by our flesh and by our gender. We're moral creatures with souls, endowed with the ability to make covenants, such as the one Ruth made with Naomi: 'Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. . . .'" I don't know what Brooks thinks he knows about Ruth and Naomi that he doesn't know, but it is true that we human beings have souls. We are ensouled bodies or, if you prefer, embodied souls, with an embodied difference that becomes "one flesh" in marriage. If we are really as unbounded by body and gender as Brooks suggests, perhaps he should make the argument that gays become straight. Conservative voices have also argued against the amendment because it is bitterly opposed by too many people. The response is obvious: if it is opposed by too many people, it will not pass. In fact, the campaign for the amendment is hardly underway, and we will see whether it does or does not command the favor of the overwhelming majorities required for passage. A more substantial conservative voice is that of columnist George Will, although in this case I'm afraid his argument is less than substantive. In a November column he says we need more "research" on whether gay marriage is good for children. I don't think so; no more than we need more research on whether polygamy is good for women and children. He speaks of gays being

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"excluded" from marriage when, in fact, only by a radical deconstruction of marriage could they be included. Finally, he says we should be wary of putting social policies into the Constitution, and I readily agree. The question, however, is whether same-sex marriage will be put into the Constitution by court rulings or will be precluded by the democratic deliberation and decision-making of the amendment process. The Constitution will be amended one way or another, either by the people or by their robed masters. My hunch is that Mr. Will has not said his last word on this. I expect the marriage question will play a large part, directly and indirectly, in the presidential campaign. The word is that President Bush doesn't want to get into a public argument about the issue. One White House aide says privately, "The President doesn't want to have to say the words 'sex' or 'sexual' in public." He probably doesn't have to. If he says marriage is between a man and a woman and he supports an amendment to that effect, that's enough. The question is there in the public mind, and will undoubtedly loom larger as people become more aware of what the courts are up to. Of course, the amendment may not become law, but at this point it would seem to be the only means to protect the public institution of marriage and check the further judicial usurpation of politics.

■ "The world must know." The words have been repeated by witnesses beyond number to unspeakable horrors, from the Holocaust to the Gulag Archipelago and the massacres of Rwanda. The world must know. Meaning that surely the world knows and does not care. Or meaning that the world must be told, and then, maybe, will do something about it. David Hawk is a remarkable man who has spent almost the entirety of his life trying to make sure that the world knows. Once the executive director of Amnesty International/USA, he was in the 1980s a key figure in exposing to the world the "killing fields" of Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge. In the 1990s he documented the genocide in Rwanda and Burundi. In the last three years he has turned his attention to studying in excruciating detail the concentration camps of North Korea. *The Hidden Gulag*, published by the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, is a carefully documented report of what he has discovered about the conservatively estimated 150,000 to 200,000 North Korean—men, women, and young children—consigned to the camps for many years or until they are worked and starved to death. Anne Applebaum, author of the extraordinary book, *Gulag: A History* (see FT, November 2003), writes in the preface to the report: "In the fullest possible sense, the contemporary leaders of North Korea are the intellectual and moral descendants of the Stalinists. . . . Some, of course, will avoid reading [this report], fully knowing that if they do read it, they will have to change their tactics, or at least think differently about the political problems posed by North Korea. Certainly after absorbing such details, it will be more difficult for Americans or Europeans to sit down and negotiate, coldly, with their Koreans counterparts and not mention human rights violations. South Koreans, when they know the details of life in the North, will also find it more difficult to argue in favor of appeasing the Northern regime. If these stories filter back to the North Korean police and administrators, those officials too will find it more difficult to justify their own behavior, or to claim that they don't know what is really happening in the country's concentration camps. And if the full truth about the camps becomes known to the wider population, then whatever support remains for the state constructed by Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il will begin, even more decisively, to ebb away. This is not to say that words can make a dictatorship collapse overnight. But words certainly can make a dictatorship collapse over time, as experience during the last two decades has shown. Totalitarian regimes are built on lies and can be damaged, even destroyed, when those lies are exposed. The greater and more detailed evidence that can be provided, the more damage the truth can do." To obtain the full report, write David Hawk at U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 1101 15th Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington D.C. 20005. "The world must know."

■ It says here that an important document from the official Lutheran-Catholic dialogue will be released in April. It is called "The Church as Koinonia of Salvation: Its Structures and Ministries." Auxiliary bishop of Milwaukee, Richard J. Sklba, is quoted by Catholic News Service: "Five years of intensive and meticulous research have produced a striking consensus within our dialogue group. It has become very clear to me that the differences between our respective Lutheran and Catholic notions and practices of ministry are not church-dividing." Among Lutheran "notions and practices" today are these: an absence of the ordained diaconate, the election of pastors to the title of bishop without ordination to the episcopate, the ordination of pastors, including women, by other pastors, and, in the absence of an episcopal magisterium, the determination of matters doctrinal, moral, and institutional by majority vote of a dominantly lay assembly. "We continue to pray for the gift of reconciliation for our churches," said Bishop Sklba. And so

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must we all, while some of us might be forgiven for also harboring a measure of skepticism about the aforementioned differences not being church-dividing. On the other hand, who knows what may be possible when dogma, doctrine, and apostolic precedent are more flexibly understood as "notions and practices"? With strenuously disciplined enthusiasm we await the April document. A specific date is not given, but one assumes it will not be April 1. (In truth and very seriously, I expect the document will be a significant theological statement and that the bishop in his remarks was just momentarily carried away.)

■ Carl F .H. Henry has died at age ninety. A big man, his life and work embodied a big part of American religious history. In 1947 he published *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism,* which called upon conservative Protestants to return from exile and reenter the public square by accepting responsibility for the culture and, most important, by making the intellectual case for orthodox Christianity. Those who heeded his call were at first called neo-evangelicals and later—because nothing neo can remain forever new—just evangelicals. Among this happily combative company were friends from Wheaton College days—Harold Lindsell, Ken Taylor, Richard Halverson, and, most notably, Billy Graham. In 1955, Graham urged Henry to launch *Christianity Today*, now the mainstream evangelical magazine, which Henry edited until 1968. He wanted the magazine to be at the intellectual and cultural edge, and often spoke of his deep disappointment with its more popular turn. Carl was an indefatigable world traveler in his promotion of evangelical causes, and I was privileged to serve with him on several ecumenical boards. He was also quick in making a point. The story is told of a lunch held by mainly liberal religious leaders to honor the Swiss theologian Karl Barth. About two hundred people were present and Carl rose to ask a question, introducing himself as the editor of *Christianity Today*. To the great mirth of the crowd, Barth responded, "Do you mean Christianity today or Christianity yesterday?" Without missing a beat, Carl answered with a smile, "Yesterday, today, and forever." While he was always ready to join with other Christians in "cobelligerency" on public issues of moral consequence, he withheld his public support of the project "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," indicating his worry that evangelicals were not prepared for the theological engagement that effort entailed. Toward the end of his life, he expressed a very doleful view of the state of evangelicalism, fearing that it had fallen captive to the market dynamics of American religiosity. He once remarked that, if he had the energy for it, he might write a book titled *The Uneasy Conscience of Contemporary Evangelicalism*. He said that, as I recall, with a smile. As I was privileged to know him, Carl Henry was that rare thing, a Christian gentleman whose graciousness of manner was on easy terms with the clarity and confidence of faith. May choirs of angels welcome him on the far side of Jordan.

■ "What on earth do those people think they're doing?" That has been the response of innumerable people watching the Episcopal Church, and perhaps the Anglican communion, on its course of self-destructing. In these pages, Philip Turner, a distinguished Anglican priest, missionary, and theology professor, writing in sorrow laced with anger, gave one answer to the above question (see FT, November 2003). It is easy to dismiss people with whom we strongly disagree as being either ignorant or crazy, or both. But we owe them and ourselves the effort of trying to understand what they think they are doing, and why. Leander Harding, rector of St. John's Church in Stamford, Connecticut, makes that effort, employing a 1992 book by the noted literary critic, Harold Bloom. In *The American Religion*, Bloom contended that religious America—whether it is Southern Baptist, Methodist, or even Mormon—is, at its heart, Gnostic. "We are," Bloom wrote, "a religiously mad culture, furiously searching for the spirit, but each of us is subject and object of the one question, which must be for the original self, a spark or breath in us that we are convinced goes back to before the creation." I will let Harding take it from there: "The quintessential American Religion is the quest for the true and original self which is the 'pearl of great price,' the ultimate value. Finding the true self requires absolute and complete freedom of choice unconstrained by any sources of authority outside the self. Limits upon personal freedom and choice are an affront to all that is sacred to the American Religion. When the self-determining self finds 'the real me' salvation is achieved and the ultimate self has achieved contact with the ultimate reality. Finding your true self is to the contemporary Gnostic the same thing as finding God. For the Gnostic the purpose of the religious community is to facilitate the quest and validate the results. The contemporary Gnostic church, which can appear in both conservative and liberal forms, is the community of those who know that they have found God because they have found their own uncreated depths. Both devotees of the New Age and many in some 'conservative' Christian circles see salvation as purely a matter of personal experience, which can only be validated by those

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who have had similar 'deeply personal' experiences. Notice how perfectly the contemporary presentation of homosexuality fits the American Religion. A person who discovers that he or she is gay has recovered his or her true self and 'come out' and come through what the Gnostics called the 'aeons,' in this case levels of personal, familial, and social oppression that hinder and constrain the true self. It is a heroic and perilous journey of self-discovery which would be familiar to a first-century Gnostic like Valentinus. That the means of liberation is sexual practice is even a familiar theme. Some ancient Gnostics were ascetic but others counseled sexual license. Both stratagems can come from the same contempt of nature and are different ways of asserting the radical independence of the self. Here is the point. Gene Robinson was elected Bishop of the Episcopal Church in New Hampshire not in spite of being gay, not as an act of toleration and compassion toward gay people, but because he is gay and as such is an icon of the successful completion of the quest to find the true and original self. He has been chosen for high religious office because he represents high religious attainment. He is being recognized and receiving regard for being an accomplished practitioner of the American Religion. According to this Gnostic logic, divorcing his wife and leaving his family to embrace the gay lifestyle is not some unfortunate concession to irresistible sexual urges but an example of the pain and sacrifice that the seeker of the true self must be willing to endure. That natural, organic, and conventional restraints must be set aside is time-worn Gnostic nostrum. From the point of view of this contemporary Gnosticism, if the Church does not validate such a noble quest for enlightenment then it invalidates itself and shows that it is no help in the only spiritual struggle that counts, the struggle to be the 'real me.' Because Gene Robinson has 'found himself' he has according to the Gnostic logic of the American Religion found God and is naturally thought to be a truly 'spiritual person' and a fit person to inspire and lead others on their spiritual journey which is to end in a discovery of the true self which is just so the discovery of the only real god, the Gnostic god. Seeing the elevation of Gene Robinson through the lens of the mythos of the American Religion explains some of the fanaticism of his defenders, explains why so many bishops of the Episcopal Church including the Presiding Bishop would be willing to take such institutional risks. Here is a paradigm of salvation that echoes deeply in the American soul and promises to restore a sense of purpose to a mainline church which has lost confidence in the story of salvation told by the orthodox tradition of the Church. Inclusion becomes the fundamental value for the Church because it allows the Church to have a real purpose of validating that people have indeed found their true identity, and thus found God. Gay people become icons of hope. To celebrate gays in the life of the Church, not accept but affirm and celebrate, is to celebrate the Church as a truly spiritual community with real spiritual power which can facilitate and validate the salvation of souls. The church leaders who are risking everything for Gene Robinson are in their own way and according to an heretical but powerful vision trying desperately to find a spiritual vocation for the Church that has some liveliness and connects deeply with the deepest yearning of the American soul. The Presiding Bishop and his company of supporters think they are regaining the lost keys of heaven. That these newly discovered keys are not the real thing but Gnostic imitators of the keys of St. Peter will be lost on those who are drunk on the promises of the American Religion of the true, free, and uncreated self."

■ Last year at this time protestors of U.S. policy in Iraq were happily claiming the support of John Paul II, even though he had been very guarded in his comments, pointing out that war always reflects a "human failure," an observation with which no morally sane person would disagree. Much less guarded was Jean-Louis Tauran, a Frenchman who was the Holy See's foreign minister. He declared the liberation of Iraq a "crime against humanity" and came close to suggesting that those who supported it were guilty of a mortal sin. Then there was Renato Cardinal Martino, formerly the Holy See's man at the United Nations and now president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, who pronounced that there was no such thing as a just war, despite 1,500 years of Catholic teaching to the contrary. Tauran, at age sixty, was recently reassigned to a quiet post as head the Vatican library. Martino has been replaced at the UN by Archbishop Celestino Migliore, an articulately thoughtful diplomat of wide experience. For months, the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano,* had been leading the charge against U.S. policy, but seemed to do something of an about-turn after the November 12 attack in Iraq in which nineteen Italian soldiers were killed. Similarly, the Jesuit publication *La Civiltà Cattolica* had for months been lambasting America's "so-called" war on terror and downplaying the threat of radical Islam. Even before the Italian casualties, it appeared to shift direction, publishing a long article explaining that "in all of its history, Islam has shown a warlike and conquering face"; that "for almost a thousand years, Europe lived under its constant threat"; and that its offensive con-

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tinues to this day, as shown by the "perpetual discrimination" and sometimes bloody persecution to which it subjects Christians and other non-Muslims. Moreover, when new cardinals were named last October, observers noted the conspicuous non-elevation of Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, president of the Council for Interreligious Dialogue, who many thought to be too compliant in dealing with Islam. Of particular importance is the role of Camillo Ruini, the cardinal vicar of Rome, who is very close to the Pope and the force behind a number of influential institutions, including the newspaper *Avvenire*. He preached at the Mass for the Italian soldiers: "To love even our enemies, this is the great treasure which we must not allow to be stripped from our conscience and heart, not even by terrorist assassins. We will not run away. On the contrary, we will confront them with all the courage, energy, and determination in our capacity. And yet we will not hate them. Instead, we will never tire of making them understand that the effort of the whole country of Italy, including her military involvement, aims at safeguarding and promoting a human society in which there is a place and dignity for each nation, culture, and religion." With respect to moral duty in a time of war, there is a year later less doubt—if any doubt was warranted—about the tradition holding.

■ When sensible people hear the word "multicultural," they've learned to brace themselves for another assault on a cherished particularity in the name of vaulting universalisms. And countries that have Ministers of Multicultural Affairs are usually unsafe for ideas and practices that have nothing to recommend them other than tradition, common sense, and popular devotion. In delightful violation of that depressing rule is Gary Hardgrave, Australia's Multicultural Affairs Minister, who this year urged schools to set up nativity scenes, throw Christmas parties, and tell again the story of the Babe of Bethlehem. "We should get out there and flaunt it rather than having people retreat from it," he told the *Australian*. Children, he said, are missing out on the constituting traditions and values of Australian culture because schools and businesses are afraid of offending those of other faiths. "There is no way on earth people have to concede traditions that have been important to them and their families for generations." Those who worry about offending, he said, "have got it completely wrong." Whether or how to celebrate Hanukkah or the Muslim festival of Eid al-Fitr is up to each school to decide, he opined. "Our culture, our tradition, is something that has attracted people from all around the world to come and live here and be part of. We have an opportunity to learn from the cultures they brought to Australia, but we were here first, our framework was in place because of all of the efforts of previous generations. Our framework is what made it possible for all those people to come, and we should never be afraid of it." Maybe the U.S. could use a Minister of Multicultural Affairs after all, if it is understood as Mr. Hardgrave understands that multiculturalism—i.e., an interest in and eagerness to engage other cultures—depends upon the affirming of our culture which, alone of world cultures, thinks multiculturalism a very good thing. It is not, one notes, just a question of who got here first. It's a question of *who* got here first. Call contemporary America pluralistic or call it a melting pot or call it a gorgeous mosaic, it didn't just happen. It happened because a people formed by biblical religion believed that hospitality to other cultures is a virtue. Today's multiculturalists who insist that all cultures are equal except our own are, by repressing the public expression of the religious grounds of that belief, inviting a resurgence of the nasty nativism that reduces cultural differences and tensions to the bullying question of who got here first. Genuine multiculturalism is the product of a particular culture and will not survive its public demise.

■ "In this effort we must be principled, courageous, and wise. We need to persuade, not just proclaim, to engage, not condemn. But we also must tell the truth." So said Bishop John Ricard of Pensacola-Tallahassee at last November's meeting of U.S. bishops. He heads a task force that is to shape the American response to last year's document from the Vatican's doctrinal office, "Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life." The document addresses the public scandal of Catholic politicians who persistently and contumaciously oppose the Church's teaching without any appropriate response from their pastors. It says that "a well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals." The fundamental contents of faith and morals seems to be somewhat stretched in Bishop Ricard's report. In the first meeting of the task force, he says, "The important role of the laity was highlighted as was the need to not limit our concern to one issue, no matter how fundamental that issue is." Politicians need to be challenged, he continues, "first and most fundamentally on the defense of unborn life, but also on the use of the death penalty, questions of war and peace, the role of marriage and family, the rights of parents to choose the best educa-

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tion for their children, the priority for the poor, and welcome for immigrants." That is a very mixed list. What the bishops conference and its staff have to say about war and peace, about how to assist the poor, and about immigration law is typically subject to public policy debate and does not represent "the fundamental contents of faith and morals." Also on capital punishment, Catholic politicians may in good conscience, and with great respect for the Pope's statements on the subject, have different prudential judgments about what the Catechism describes as "the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime." There is no such question about the moral obligation to protect innocent human life. On abortion, Bishop Ricard rightly criticizes politicians who say, "I am personally opposed, but. . . ." One hopes the bishops are not saying, "First and most fundamentally, but. . . ." As for being "principled, courageous, and wise," it seems odd for a bishop to speak about "just" proclaiming, when proclaiming is the first and principal duty of a bishop—a duty that, with respect to protecting the unborn, is too often neglected. And when proclaimed is too often bundled with a host of other issues, lest a bishop be deemed insufficiently progressive and inordinately concerned about the slaughter of the innocents. Moreover, is it really true that a bishop is required to "not condemn"? To persuade, engage, converse, dialogue, pray with, reproach, encourage —yes to all that and more. But there are also public acts and public statements that call for public condemnation. Such acts and statements are attached to people with names. We are not without guidance on such matters. "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church; and if he refuses to listen even to the Church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." Bishop Ricard said on behalf of the task force, "We plan to bring back a set of general guidelines to help shape the prudential judgments we make as bishops." Meanwhile, it will continue to be the case that a frightened young woman who procures an abortion is automatically excommunicate, while politicians who aid, abet, and encourage her in such great evil remain in apparently untroubled communion with the Church, some of whose bishops seem not entirely serious about what the Church teaches. The mandate of the task force is to propose a remedy for the public scandal created by such politicians and (although it is not said) by such bishops. Bishop Ricard's report on the work of the task force so far has elements of a good beginning, but. . . .

■ The Sensitivity Sweepstakes winner of the month is the *New York Observer,* which goes into what appears to be editorial high dudgeon over John Updike's reference to a "rich Jew" in the course of reviewing a novel in the *New Yorker.* The editors fume, "Is the *New Yorker* implicitly endorsing anti-Semitism in its pages? . . . To say that the expression 'rich Jew' is loaded with historical anti-Semitism is an understatement. Would Mr. Updike describe someone as 'a rich Catholic' or 'a rich Protestant'?" Oh, dear. I gather that the character in the novel is strongly portrayed as a Jew who is very rich, as in "rich Jew." I suppose Mr. Updike might have referred to "a rich man who just happens to be Jewish," but then some other publication might have asked, "Is the *New Yorker* implicitly endorsing bad writing in its pages?" And the author under review might object to the misrepresentation of his character. True, one would not ordinarily write about "a rich Protestant," but that is because Protestant is assumed to be more or less the default identification in American culture. But "rich Catholic"? Our literature is littered with the phrase, especially when the subject is Irish Catholics, and most notably when their name is Kennedy. Just as nobody is offended if one refers to "a rich Puerto Rican." It ought not to be offensive to state the obvious: that Jews are a minority and that some Jews, but by no means all, are rich. And certainly not if the novelist is writing about a rich Jew. What is rich here is the *New York Observer* one-upping the Anti-Defamation League in parodying our society's ever alert language police. And I say that without even knowing whether the editorial writer is Jewish. If so and, as I would prefer to think, the editorial is intended as a spoof of sensitivity run amok, congratulations to a funny Jew. Not Jackie Mason funny, to be sure, but funny nonetheless.

■ The Jesuits at the Woodstock Center hosted a panel on the subject "Restoring Trust in Church Leadership." Asked to name bishops who set an example and offer "a model for imitation," Margaret Steinfels, former editor of *Commonweal*, said: "It is probably safe to offer the name of the late Joseph Bernardin in this respect since he certainly was a model for imitation. I'll hazard another name, Archbishop Rembert Weakland. I always felt that he was a man who was in touch with what was going on in his archdiocese and in the Church in the United States, and I guess his end was unfortunate, but I still cling to the idea that he was a good bishop." One expects that many will think that answer fails to pass the giggle test, since Cardinal Bernardin, while widely admired for personal virtues, is commonly viewed as the architect of the bureaucratic episcopacy that has done so much to bring church leadership into disrepute,

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and Archbishop Weakland was forced to resign from a rancorously divided and demoralized archdiocese after it was revealed that he had paid out hundreds of thousands of dollars in blackmail to a gay friend. Before dismissing Ms. Steinfels' answer out of hand, however, we do well to remember the subject under discussion, "Restoring Trust in Church Leadership." It may well be argued that both bishops contributed powerfully to restoring trust that, despite all, Christ has not abandoned his Church. But I confess to being a little surprised that Ms. Steinfels can only "guess" that Weakland's end was unfortunate. One might also wonder if his leadership days are ended, since *Commonweal* has only recently published a long article by Archbishop Weakland setting forth his well known and well tested vision for the renewal of the Church in America.

■ A reader who is an Episcopalian clergyman has over the years reproached me for using "Episcopalian" as an adjective and for referring to "Episcopalianism" as a religious phenomenon. He is, he insisted, Anglican and part of the ecclesial communion called Anglicanism. Then came, on top of everything else, the schismatic consecration of a gay bishop. He wrote last week, "I now concede the field to you on both counts. 'Episcopalian' is an adjective and 'Episcopalianism' is different from not only Anglicanism but also orthodox Protestantism, Orthodoxy, and Catholicism. It is good that we know about the existence of things Episcopalian and the movement that is Episcopalianism, in order that we might beware of them." It is gratifying to win a point on usage, but at what a sad price.

■ "I promise you I will vote my conscience. Unless, that is, it gets in the way of my political career." That, variously stated, is the principled position of some Wisconsin legislators who were not happy with a letter sent them by Bishop Raymond Burke of LaCrosse (recently appointed Archbishop of St. Louis). In his letter, Bishop Burke reminded them that, as Catholics, they had a moral duty to protect the innocent, especially the unborn and those threatened by euthanasia. Among the outraged politicians was Democratic Senator Julie Lassa who said, "I'm concerned that the bishop would pressure legislators to vote according to the dictates of the Church instead of the wishes of their constituents because that is not consistent with our Democratic ideals. When I was elected, I swore an oath to uphold the Constitution and that means I have to represent all the people of all faiths in my district." No, the bishop urged that she vote her conscience as formed by the teachings of the Church, which as a member she presumably shares, rather than the dictates of her constituents. A more principled understanding of what it means to represent one's constituents was classically set forth by Edmund Burke to the electors of Bristol in 1774: "Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion." The Church has no power to dictate or compel how politicians vote. She does have a pastoral responsibility for their souls, and the authority to say how they stand with the Church. Of the persistently anti-life politicians, Bishop Burke says, "If they were to continue to do that, I would simply have to ask them not to present themselves to receive the sacraments because they would not be Catholics in good standing." What is it that politicians don't understand about that? What is it that too many bishops do not understand about that? One hopes that the leadership of Archbishop Burke in St. Louis will be an encouragement, in the precise sense of inducing courage, among his peers.

■ A few years ago there appeared the Interfaith Alliance, backed by television producer Norman Lear and other religious leaders, to counter the influence of the Religious Right. I admit to having had a little fun at the time noting that its recognizable names were almost all "emeritus" or "former" something or the other on the Religious Left. I haven't heard much from or about the Interfaith Alliance for a long time, although I notice they still have a website. Now comes the announcement of a new organization, the Clergy Leadership Network (CLN). The *New York Times* describes it as "a coalition of moderate and liberal religious leaders that will operate from an expressly religious, expressly partisan point of view. The Rev. Albert M. Pennybacker of Lexington, Kentucky, is the chief executive of CLN and he says, 'The Christian Right has been very articulate, but they have been exclusive and judgmental of anyone who doesn't agree with them.'" CLN has opened an office across the street from the Democratic National Committee and Jenny Backus, a Democratic consultant who is helping the group, observes, "There's been a concerted effort by Christian conservatives to question the faith of people who disagree with their position. . . . The Clergy Leadership Network will now be the amen corner for people of faith who express disagreement with the administration and the Christian Right." William Sloane Coffin, age seventy-nine, was already a seasoned activist when he became chaplain of Yale in 1958 and, despite failing health, is lending his efforts to the new organization. "The arrogance and

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self-righteousness of the present administration are very dangerous," Coffin declares. "Silence by members of the clergy in the face of such arrogance is tantamount to betrayal of the Gospel or the Torah or the Koran." While the twenty-five-member national committee is "predominantly Protestant," the *Times* report says that CLN also hopes to attract Muslim leaders. Many of them are known to share the organization's opposition to the Bush administration. Diane Knippers, head of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, which is critical of the political propensities of liberal oldline churches, says she welcomes the formation of CLN. Now that the leftists have their own partisan organization, she says, maybe they will stop using the churches to advance their agenda. That is just the kind of judgmental reaction one would expect from someone who betrays the Gospel by failing to speak out against the arrogance and self-righteousness of the present administration.

■ I'm often asked about the Tertio Millennio Seminar. It started out some twelve years ago in, of all places, Lichtenstein. The idea was to bring together graduate students and young professionals from Central and Eastern Europe with their American counterparts to study Catholic social doctrine, with a particular focus on the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. At the suggestion of the Pope, we moved it after a couple of years to Krakow, Poland, where we meet for three summer weeks in a thirteenth-century Dominican priory. The seminar has been a life-changing experience for hundreds of young people, and for its somewhat older leaders, including Michael Novak, George Weigel, Father Maciej Zieba, and your servant. For particulars, check out *www.tertiomillenniosemінar.org*.

■ "Islam is a religion of peace," President Bush has said on several occasions. One fervently wishes there were more evidence to support that assertion, but I understand that there are compelling reasons for Bush to avoid any suggestion that the war on terrorism is, at bottom, a religious war between Christianity and Islam. Then, at a news conference during the state visit to Britain, a reporter asked whether "Muslims worship the same Almighty." Bush replied, "I do say that freedom is the Almighty's gift to every person. I also condition it by saying freedom is not America's gift to the world. It's much greater than that, of course." Then there was a definite pause, as though he knew he might get in trouble for saying, "And I believe we worship the same God." That did ruffle some Christian feathers in this country. An official of the Southern Baptist Convention said Bush "is simply mistaken." He added, "We should always remember that he is commander in chief, not theologian in chief. The Bible is clear on this: the one and true God is Jehovah, and his only begotten Son is Jesus Christ." The president of the National Association of Evangelicals issued a statement: "The Christian God encourages freedom, love, forgiveness, prosperity, and health. The Muslim god appears to value the opposite. The personalities of each god are evident in the cultures, civilizations, and dispositions of the people that serve them. Muhammad's central message was submission; Jesus' central message was love. They seem to be very different personalities." If I understand our separated brethren, we got a competition between gods going here, with our God (upper case) being much nicer than their god, as revealed, so to speak, in the superior niceness of those of us who serve Him. Of course this is theological nonsense. It would seem to suggest a kind of polytheism. Christians confess that there is one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jews worship the one God whom Jesus called Father and taught us to worship, although Jews do not recognize that the God whom we both worship has revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Muslims worship the same God (although calling him Allah, as do Arabic-speaking Jews and Christians), believing that His definitive revelation was given through Muhammad. So also St. Paul preaching in the Areopagus: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth." The dispute between Jews, Muslims, and Christians is not over whether they worship the same God, but over how the one God is rightly understood and worshiped. It is true that Bush is commander in chief, not theologian in chief, but on this question he is a better theologian than some of his evangelical critics.

■ It has been five years since that exhilarating pastoral visit by John Paul II to Cuba. Exhilarating and oppressively hot, as I remember it. That was also the week the Monica Lewinsky story broke, and many of us back at the hotel in Havana speculated whether it would be the week that two presidents fell. Neither did, of course. But in Cuba the Pope's bold and relentless proclamation of gospel freedom, of human rights, of the need for the state to respect the integrity of the family met with delirious enthusiasm from crowds of hundreds of thousands from one end of

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the island to the other. Cubans and visitors alike told one another that, after this, the Castro regime would have to change. It has. But at least in some ways, for the worse. That is the message of a recent document by the bishops of Cuba, "The Social Presence of the Church: A Theological-Pastoral Instruction," that has been going the rounds on the Internet and underground press. The bishops write, "Beginning after the visit of the Pope, Cuba has witnessed an increasing return to the language and methods typical of the first years of the Revolution. . . . Society is identified with the state, and thus the state is transformed into the conscience of the citizens." Long prison terms have been given to political dissidents, and some have been executed after what the bishops call summary proceedings. Mussolini first formulated the totalitarian doctrine, "Everything within the state, nothing against the state, nothing outside the state." Christians cannot agree, the bishops declare: "Charity and Christian love are realized in a tangible way in a social fabric, in an organization of the city, the 'polis.' It is right to speak of political charity, because Christian love leads to the transformation of society and becomes incarnate in social institutions." Under Fidel, the Church's life is limited to "sanctuary religion," and even then is barely tolerated. "The Cuban state's conception of the Church seems to disown the latter's true nature and mission. The Church is judged as an ally or an enemy, without any alternatives, according to an unchangeable, presupposed ideology that only for the sake of situational convenience can put on the trappings of redundant courtesy in exchange for demonstrations of scant tolerance. . . . We are under the impression that our country is undergoing a subtle battle against the Church, which is treated as a private entity or as a marginal entity that can take away force and energy from the revolution. We perceive the existence of an Office for Religious Affairs in the Central Committee of the Communist Party as an instance of control that limits the evangelizing action of the Church, rather than an entity capable of making possible, through dialogue, the search for and solution of questions of common interest." During his visit, the Pope urged that the world must open itself to Cuba and Cuba must open itself to the world. In many ways, including aspects of U.S. policy, the former has been happening. In response, the aging Castro regime is increasingly turning itself into an island redoubt of ideological rigor. It is a great sadness. There are critics who claim that the Pope so boldly unfurling the alternative of freedom scared the regime into a reaction of increased oppression. But his job was to speak the truth in the confidence of the connection between truth and freedom (see John 8:32). The vindication of that confidence will not be forever delayed.

■ Pastor Ann-Cathrin Jarl of the Church of Sweden is an expert in "feminist economics" and is the author of a new book from Fortress Press, *In Justice: Women and Global Economics*. She writes: "Issues of justice are crucial to a viable understanding of present global challenges. Those whose voices are not heard show signs of desperation. Women are demanding to be heard. The consciousness of women's expertise in household matters, economics, is growing globally. This book takes a hard look at what constitutes a process towards economic justice from a Christian social ethics perspective." After all the twists and turns of feminism in recent decades, its proponents are surely showing signs of desperation if the argument is that a woman's superiority is derived from her expertise in household matters.

■ This is a different take that raises all kinds of interesting questions about cause and effect, the meaning of democracy, Islam and Christianity, and more. "The True Clash of Civilizations," published in *Foreign Policy* by Ronald Inglehart (University of Michigan) and Pippa Norris (Harvard) aims to set Samuel Huntington straight. Huntington, it will be recalled, wrote about a clash of civilizations based on conflicts of religiously grounded morality and culture. Not so, say Inglehart and Norris; the real clash is over divorce, abortion, gender equality, gay rights, and related "self-expression values." "The real fault line," they write, "between the West and Islam which Huntington's theory completely overlooks, concerns gender equality and sexual liberation. In other words, the values separating the two cultures have much more to do with eros than demos. As younger generations in the West have gradually become more liberal on these issues, Muslims nations have remained the most traditional societies in the world." This is a masterful muddle. What Huntington understands and Inglehart and Norris overlook is that ideas and practices with respect to marriage, family, abortion, and sexuality are derived from religion, morality, and culture. Theirs is a quite remarkable confusion of what is cause and what is effect. "The self-expression values," they say, "are crucial to democracy." Was America less democratic when homosexuality was in the closet and mothers did not have the legal right to have their children killed? No doubt some would answer that in the affirmative. But the foundation of the American idea of democracy is the Declaration's belief that "just government is derived from the con-

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sent of the governed." The "self-expression values" championed by the authors—notably abortion and gay rights—have been, for the most part, imposed by the judiciary without the consent of the people. It is a strange argument that a society is certified as democratic when it has policies that can only be established by antidemocratic means. Huntington got it right: the clash is between different cultures grounded in different religions, and resulting in different ways of thinking and acting about marriage, family, law, politics, and much else. One thing is for sure: if democracy is defined in terms of self-expression values and unbridled eros, most Muslims will want nothing to do with it. And, for that matter, neither will most Americans. Fortunately, outside the libidinous hot house of prestige universities, few people subscribe to the theory and practice of democracy espoused by professors Inglehart and Norris.

■ When Tom Wolfe's *A Man in Full* came out, Mary Ann Glendon wrote in these pages ("Who's Afraid of Tom Wolfe?", August/September 1999) that the young man Conrad was clearly a Christian figure, complete with analogies to St. Paul's experience in escaping from prison after an earthquake, and so forth. Some thought Professor Glendon was reaching, but now Mr. Wolfe, I think for the first time publicly, acknowledges that she was right. An interviewer asks, "In *A Man in Full*, you delve into Epictetus and Stoicism. Was there a single event in your life which prompted interest in that subject?" Wolfe: "No. For story-telling reasons I wanted Conrad, born into a family with no religion, to have a religious conversion. The 'born-again Christian' had become all too common a subject. But then Stoicism, which I knew to have been a religion, not just a philosophy, popped into my head." So there you have it. One might only add that, in the time of the classic Stoics, the line between religion and philosophy was not as it is today. For instance, Justin Martyr and other early Christian apologists regularly explained their embrace of Christianity in terms of having discovered "the true philosophy."

■ Hilaire Belloc writing from the Sahara as he pondered the ruins of Timgad: "We sit by and watch the Barbarian, we tolerate him; in the long stretches of peace we are not afraid. We are tickled by his irreverence, his comic inversion of our old certitudes and our fixed creeds refreshes us; we laugh. But as we laugh we are watched by large and awful faces from beyond: and on these faces there is no smile." The theater world is abuzz with the effort to mainstream Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*. The show was wildly acclaimed on the Great Gay Way that Broadway has become. It is titteringly asked whether dumb, plodding, pious, bourgeois, so very ordinary America is ready for this scintillating inversion of its old certitudes and fixed creeds, in the half-hope that the answer is in the negative, thus providing further proof of the genius and, yes, the courage of Mr. Kushner and, by extension, of the herd of independent minds who join in his contempt for our repressive society that would, don't you know, jail him if it could. Mr. Kushner has also written a little book, *Save Your Democratic Soul!: Rants, Screeds, and Other Public Utterances*. Civil discourse is not his shtick. His agent says that in his many campus appearances Mr. Kushner "prefers to speak to progressive audiences open to change." But of course. Because old certitudes are no longer certain and fixed creeds no longer so fixed, people who cannot help but know better nervously applaud the assault on what they used to call their convictions, thus appeasing the great god Progress who might otherwise be displeased. Their nervous approval is offered in the hope of avoiding the terrible judgment of the priesthood of comic inversion that they are too witless to join in the fun of trashing what, to their embarrassment, they know they believe. They are keenly aware that their every response is ruthlessly scrutinized by the queer eye for the straight guy. Their laughter is forced, however, for, try as they might, they cannot quite rid themselves of the suspicion that they are being watched also by those large and awful and unsmiling faces from beyond.

■ Some church bulletin bloopers are legendary. Here are a few that a reader has gleaned from a local newspaper.

"The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks On the Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'"

"For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs."

"Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you."

"Don't let worry kill you. Let the church help."

"The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon."

"Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands."

"The Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Please use the back door."

"Weight Watchers will meet at 7:00 p.m. at the First

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Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance."

"Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered."

Finally, this one, which I've seen before, is not only legendary but, I suspect, apocryphal: "The associate minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: 'I Upped My Pledge—Up Yours.'"

■ The "purification of memories" for which John Paul II has repeatedly called is catching on all over. In Fiji, in the tiny settlement of Nubutautau, villagers wept as they apologized to descendants of a British missionary, the Reverend Thomas Baker, whom their ancestors ate 136 years ago. The ceremony of reconciliation included the slaughter of a cow and the gift of 100 sperm whale teeth to the Rev. Baker's descendants. At the end of the ceremony, the village chief, Ratu Filimoni Nawawabalavu, embraced the British visitors. He is the descendant of the chief who cooked the missionary. I don't know if the Pope would approve of the slaughter of the cow, although it might be covered under the rubric of "the enculturation of the gospel." The save-the-whales people will probably not be so understanding about the teeth. The great question is: If the descendants of Thomas Baker can be reconciled with the Fijians whose ancestors had him for supper, why can't there be peace in the Middle East? Answer me that.

■ I spend a good deal of time on campuses and confess to succumbing occasionally to a measure of jadedness about the state of higher education. Prestige schools that demand $40,000 in annual tuition often seem like the backwaters of American culture, an elaborately and expensively institutionalized form of extended day care for students not yet ready for the job market. Of course a determined student, a good library, and one or two intelligent mentors can make for a solid education almost anywhere. The frenzied race to get into "the best" schools has a lot more to do with networking than with education. Among the great weaknesses of the people who run our massive higher education system is that they are afflicted by the one thing that education is presumably intended to counter: ignorance. To cite but one instance at hand, and one that is at the heart of this journal's concern, a recent national survey asked administrators and students about the First Amendment. Only 21 percent of administrators and 30 percent of students knew that the First Amendment guarantees religious freedom. Only six percent of administrators and two percent of students knew that religious freedom is the first freedom mentioned in the First Amendment. Only 41 percent of administrators and 32 percent of students believe that religious people should be permitted to advocate their views by whatever legal means available. On the other hand, 74 percent of students and 87 percent of administrators think it "essential" that people be able to express their beliefs *unless*—and then come a host of qualifications, all amounting to the condition that their beliefs not "offend others." Commenting on the survey, Alan Charles Kors, a University of Pennsylvania historian, said, "If an antiwar group put up a poster of Iraqi children they claimed were maimed by George Bush, nobody would blink. But let a pro-life group put up a poster of an aborted fetus and suddenly it becomes, 'Well, they crossed the line.'" Students surveyed said they remember having heard something about the Bill of Rights back in high school. But then they moved on to higher things.

■ There has in recent years been a slew of books and articles offering variations on "Why I Am Still a Catholic." I confess I find the genre very odd. In some cases, it is as though the author is doing the Church a favor, in almost all cases the implication is that the "I" in question is in a morally and spiritually superior position and feels the need to explain to others why such a splendid person continues to associate with such a disreputable community. Here is another long article on the "dysfunctionality" of the Catholic Church, with specific reference to the current scandals. The author offers some conventional, and for the most part sensible, suggestions on how the bishops might better lead the Church, and along the way discusses how the scandals almost drove him to leave. He concludes with this: "If we don't actually change the way we do things, it is hard to imagine how severe the consequences will be the next time the Church is called to account. Personally, I doubt my own faith would survive a disillusionment on this scale a second time." Really? He is generously giving the Church another chance? I don't know in what he has invested his faith, but, if one believes that the Catholic Church is what she claims to be, *nothing*—not sex abuse scandals, not maladministration, not cowardly and incompetent bishops, not popes with bastard children, not simony, not lies, secrecy, inquisitions, nor any other moral perfidy—could possibly lead one to return the gift of being in communion with her. Why am I still a Catholic? Because I am a sinner in need of grace, a learner in need of guidance, a disciple determined to be faithful to the way that Christ, for reasons I don't understand, constituted his Church. No number of bad bishops or,

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for that matter, bad popes can change that. As I recall, there was a time when most Catholics seemed to understand that. But that was before the idea spread that the Church is simply a voluntary association in which one can cancel one's membership, or a religious retailer from which one can withdraw one's patronage. I will not name the author of the above mentioned article, or the magazine in which it appeared. Give them another chance.

■ We continue to receive requests from Readers of First Things (ROFTERS) who would like to convene independent discussion groups in their local communities. If you are a ROFTER living in one of the cities listed below and would like to join other readers to discuss articles and issues related to our magazine, contact the following individuals. Check the last page of our last four issues and our website for more ROFTER groups around the country. Finally, if you would like to start a group in your area, please send us your contact information.

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Sources: WHILE WE'RE AT IT: Bishop Sklba on Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, Catholic News Service, December 10, 2003. Leander Harding on Episcopalians, *www.titusonenine.blogspot.com*. Vatican shift on Iraq, Sandro Magister on *www.chiesa.com*. Minister of Multicultural Affairs in Australia, *www.news.com*, December 1, 2003. Rich Jew, *New York Observer*, December 1, 2003. Bishop Burke on politicians, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 3, 2003. Clergy Leadership Network, *New York Times*, November 17, 2003. President Bush on God, *Washington Post*, November 22, 2003. The news from Cuba, *www.chiesa.com*, September 29, 2003. True clash of civilizations, Website of *Foreign Policy*, June, 2003. Wolfe's *A Man in Full*, *www.nytimes.com*., April 24, 2003. A stew in Fiji, *New York Times* November 14, 2003. Religious freedom in "higher education," *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Sun*, November 21, 2003.

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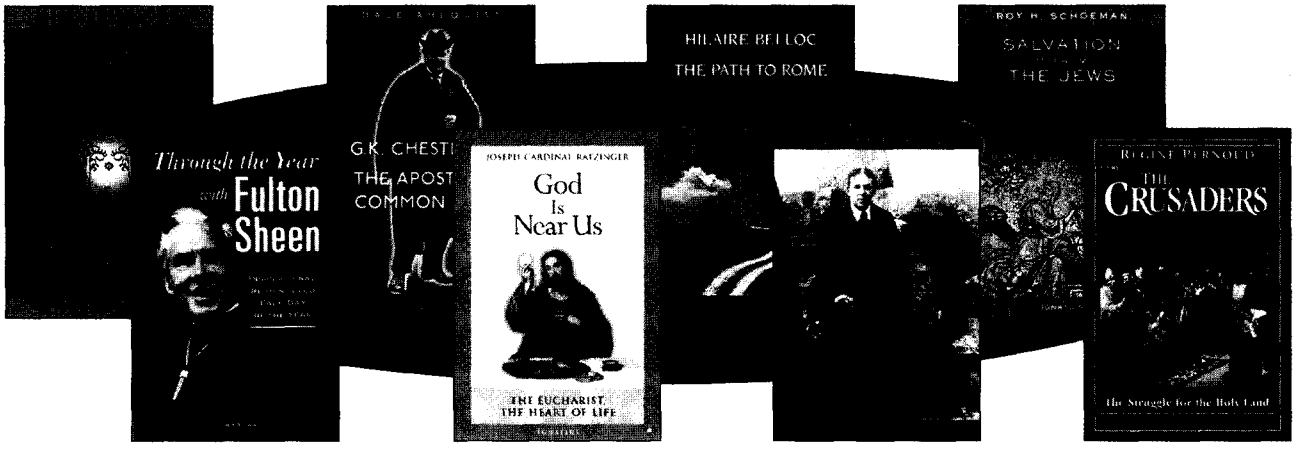

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